



7.

TWENTY-FIVE SERMONS.

A MEMORIAL

OF

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS' MINISTRY.

BY

JOHN CORDNER,

MINISTER OF THE CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH, MONTREAL.

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Mr John Patton
J. C. —

TO

THE CONGREGATION

WORSHIPPING

In the Church of the Messiah, Montreal;

THESE

TWENTY-FIVE SERMONS

ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

AS

A MEMORIAL OF

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS' MINISTRY.

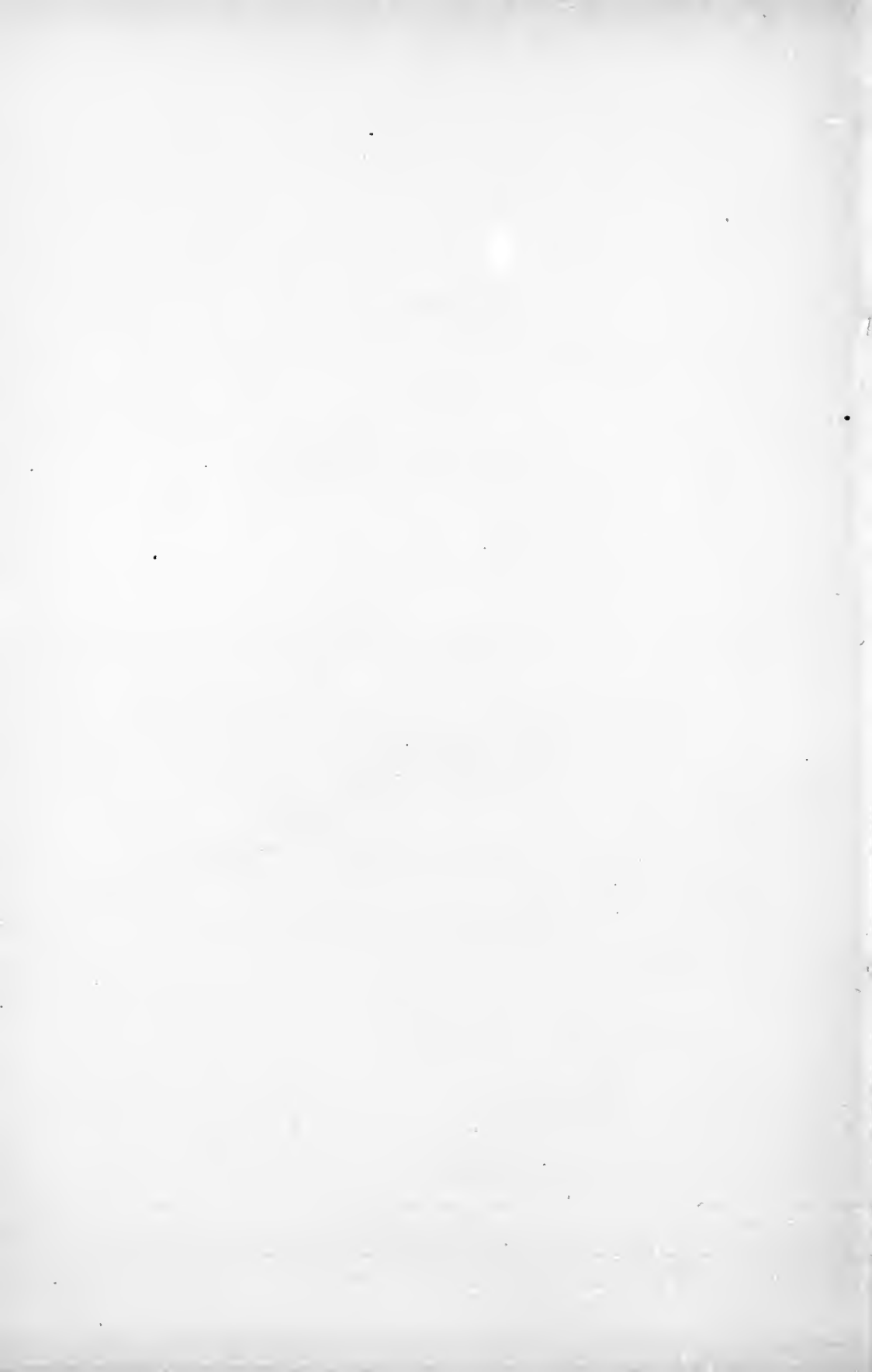


NOTE.

Of the many books printed in these days, books of sermons are perhaps in least demand by the public. It was not through any special desire to publish, that the present volume came to be printed. The inscription, on the preceding leaf, indicates the simple purpose of its appearance. I felt that the people whom it has been my privilege to serve as minister of the Gospel for the last quarter of a century, might be gratified to have some permanent memorial of this period of our connection. I can offer no particular explanation why the sermons here printed have been selected rather than others. Such as they are, however, they are given in print just as they were prepared for the pulpit. And, presented in this form, they are, of course, open to public reading so far as any interest may be taken in them outside of our own congregation. Those who heard them spoken from the pulpit will remember that where the printed discourse appears bare or abrupt, it was amplified during delivery; and that the longer sermons, when preached, were divided into convenient portions at consecutive services.

J. C.

November, 1868.



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SERMON I.

TWENTY AND FIVE YEARS.

Oct. 25th 1868.

“He reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem.”—2 *Chron.* xx. 31.

TWENTY and five years :—This, according to the Hebrew chronicle, was the term of Jehoshaphat’s reign as king of Judah. In the Hebrew psalms the days of a man’s life have been set down in a general way as three score years and ten, or four score. This is the familiar statement of the solemn psalm-prayer of Moses, known as the ninetieth psalm of the Bible—the march of whose grand verses awes the soul, and stills it into rest upon the eternal God. This statement of the length of man’s mortal years was made as the result of observation and experience, while man yet lived a simple pastoral and agricultural life. With the changed condition of human pursuits which civilization, and especially our modern civilization brings, the average term of human life upon earth is reduced materially from the term given by Moses of old. In these days

we hardly dare to state half the number of four score years as the average duration of human life. In our modern tables of mortality we see a very large proportion of our race consigned to the grave before the years of infancy have been passed. Then the exposure to disease and death is so great to those who survive the earlier years, that a large proportion of these, again, are carried away before they enter the period which brings to man the more serious responsibilities of maturity. Thus it comes to pass that when any of us can speak of twenty-five years' service in any particular place, or department of duty, the statement means, with respect to time, rather more to us than it could have done in the case of any prince or patriarch, husbandman or shepherd of ancient Judea.

Twenty and five years—a quarter of a century—as a term of service I can use it to-day, with reference to my ministry in this place. The services of this present Sunday, it being the last Sunday of this month of October, eighteen hundred and sixty-eight, will close a period of twenty-five years' ministry. So that if I should live to stand in this pulpit on this day week, I shall then enter on my twenty-sixth year of ministerial service to this congregation. Looking forward, a quarter of a century makes a long term; but looking backward, it does not seem so lengthened. Looking backward our years seem “like a tale that is told.” But who can look forward so long? None of us. God holds the future in his own sight. In the

order of the Divine dealing with us, every moment lifts its own curtain. Let us dutifully accept God's method, and rightly use each day as it comes; and filial faith will give us all needed assurance for the morrow. The future we cannot penetrate; the future we need not penetrate. But the path of the past over which we have journeyed may be reviewed for our use in the present, and our guidance in the future.

Looking back through twenty-five years we can notice many changes in our general community, and a marked growth in the visible proportions of our city. If we could pause to notice the changes on a wider scale which the last twenty-five years have brought, we should have a survey of immense interest and importance. Of all the many revolutions, social and political, which have taken place during the last quarter of a century, that which has come to the neighboring nation of the United States, has been the most signal and important. The abolition of slavery in the American Union, brought about by an insurrection designed to strengthen and perpetuate that institution, is, in itself, a very notable and instructive event. But taken in connection with the disastrous four years' war involved therein, and the reconstruction of society necessitated thereby, it becomes an event destined to a conspicuous and commanding place in history. It marks one of those grand periods of providential movement which future ages will look back upon, and contemplate with special interest. There have been many European revolutions during the last twenty-five

years, involving much bloodshed and social confusion, and bringing political changes more or less important to various peoples and potentates. Not the least important of the European revolutions, although involving neither bloodshed nor social confusion, is that which has recently taken place in England, whereby a large proportion of her working population has been invested with the elective franchise. Here we see an extensive popular privilege obtained, in a constitutional and peaceful way, of great immediate importance, but of greater importance, considered with reference to its future results. We see in this event a recognition of the dignity of labor and of the value of the working man in the body politic. Herein we see a just claim conceded, when it was made to appear that the right time had come for the concession. And this opens the way more clearly for the further concessions of just claims, which are sure to be insisted on by the advancing intelligence of the age. Among the first of these, likely to be urged, is the abolition of ecclesiastical monopolies in national institutions and property. The Irish Church, as now by law established, will soon be called to account in this matter, and whether the struggle be long or short, it can only be brought to a close by doing simple justice to all the people of the land. In England the monopoly of the established Church has a deeper root and a wider hold, and it will remain longer than the Irish monopoly. But when we look back twenty-five years, and see the substantial reforms which have been accomplished during that

time, we see the probability of the downfall of the monopoly now enjoyed by the established Church in England. Whoever shall stand at the close of the next quarter of a century will probably see the ecclesiastical and university property of the nation used for the benefit of the entire people of the nation,—not held, as it now is, for the exclusive enjoyment of any particular section of the general body of religionists. Every advance made toward religious equality as the recognised policy of the nation is a step in the way of simple justice which is sure to redound to the highest interest of the nation. In every triumph of justice which abolishes a standing wrong, and removes temptation to ecclesiastical cupidity and pride, Christianity is a gainer.

I have referred to the changes which have taken place in our own city and general community within the last twenty-five years. Montreal has increased in dimensions, in population, in prosperity and the visible tokens thereof. Two-thirds of the present population of our city has been the growth of the last quarter of a century, and our augmented population has made its clear mark in stretching new streets and raising new and substantial buildings in every direction. Montreal has had, and still enjoys its full measure of advantage from the general progress made in the arts and enterprises which facilitate human intercourse and extend commerce. Twenty-five years ago a journey to Boston or New York took about three days. Now it can be made in one day ; or if we wish to eco-

nomise time we may do it in a night. Trans-atlantic steamships were rare twenty-five years since. By going to New York or Boston we could get a single weekly line. Now we have several lines, and some of them coming to our own wharves. If any one had said, twenty-five years ago, that in this year, eighteen hundred and sixty-eight, the events of to-day in London, Paris or Madrid, should appear as news in the Montreal papers of to-morrow morning, most of us would have looked upon him as a mere visionary. But the vision of the Atlantic telegraph is now an accomplished fact, and we look for its results as a matter of course. Thus it is, I say, that Montreal has shared fairly and fully in the benefits of the great tide of progress which has set in in this direction during the last quarter of a century.

We must, however, limit our review of the growth of our city; and, for fitting illustration just now, refer more particularly to the improvement and increase of church buildings. There are between fifty and sixty church buildings in our city and suburbs now--buildings, I mean, specially erected and duly set apart for religious worship. And of this whole number there are not ten which were in existence twenty-five years ago. We can say, then, that nearly fifty churches have been built since, making an average of almost two for each year. Now, if church building is to be regarded as an evidence of the interest taken in religion, and I think that with due allowance it is to be so regarded, then the result is creditable and encouraging. Several

new worshipping societies have been established, who have raised new buildings, and many of the old congregations have erected new churches. As an illustration of the changes which have taken place in the ministry in Montreal, I observe that of the officiating Protestant clergymen now in the city, more than forty in number, only five are of longer standing than myself. Several of those who were engaged in active duty here when I came, have since died at their posts, and others have removed to other spheres of labor. The places of these have been filled, and others, again, have come into the new fields of duty which an increasing population demanded.

As we meet here to-day, however, the closing Sunday of a twenty-five years' term of service, on my part, to this congregation, the changes and the growth of our own worshipping society is the matter of interest which lies more immediately before us. Have we grown in numbers in the same proportion as our general community has grown? Without the least danger of exaggeration, we can say that we have grown in the full proportion of the city's increase of population. By going into details of figures, I could make this statement stronger. But it is strong enough as it stands. Coming here, as I did twenty-five years ago, on an invitation signed by nineteen persons only, not more than half of whom represented families, I can hardly say what number should be considered actually connected with us on my arrival. As the first regularly settled minister of this congregation, it was not

until I had been here nearly a year that I could make any proper computation of the number of persons interested in establishing and maintaining a worshipping society of Liberal Christians. But dating from the time when such a computation became possible, I can confidently say, that our numerical growth has fully equalled that of the city. And, besides, I can state that a number of fellow-worshippers, equal to the number of our congregation as it now stands, have, through the two causes of death and removal from the city, been removed from our company during the last twenty-five years. This indicates the kind of change which is constantly going on in all larger centres of population on this continent.

It would appear, then, that so far as outward increase is concerned, we should thank God and take courage. Our growth in this respect has been as great as we could have been authorized to expect, considering the misapprehensions and prejudices which exist against our views of religion. That we should have needed to enlarge our church accommodation, as we have done by the erection of this commodious edifice ten years ago, and placing it quite free from debt, shows an actual growth in numbers beyond what was expected when our first church was built. During the first year of my ministry, as some of you remember, we met for worship in a very humble hired room, now occupied as a shop, in the square below. In the beginning of the next winter, we removed to our new church, then raised on this site. We assembled in

the basement room, while the main part of the building was carried on to completion. On the eighth day of December, eighteen hundred and forty-four, we first met here for worship, when the Lord's supper was administered, for the first time, to fifty-five communicants. During the spring of the following year, we obtained the necessary act from the Legislature to authorize the minister of this congregation to keep a register. On the seventeenth of March, eighteen hundred and forty-five, this act received the royal sanction.* This gave us full legal rights, and placed us on a legal equality with any other religious denomination in the country.

While we should be grateful to God for such outward and visible increase as we have had, it would be folly and sin to rely on any such increase as a complete attainment. I have no shadow of doubt that more might have been accomplished for the cause of God and man, and for ourselves, if all our members had been equally faithful to their privileges, and devoted to their trusts. Nor have I any shadow of doubt that more may be done still, if we are only faithful to our duty and true to our light. If there had been no halting or faltering or

* The first entries of birth, baptism, marriage, and burial, in the register of the Unitarian Congregation are as follow :

Birth :—Edward D. White, 31st March, 1845.

Burial :—John Smith, 31st March, 1845.

Baptism :—John Perry, 15th April, 1845.

Marriage :—Thomas Workman and Annabella Eadie, 10th September, 1845.

negligence on the part of any of us, we should have had wider and more substantial results than we have to-day. And I feel more and more convinced every year that it only requires ordinary fidelity on our own part, to make our congregation prosperous, and an instrument of high usefulness to ourselves and to others—an efficient means of promoting the kingdom of God among men. That much prejudice still exists in the popular mind against Unitarianism, and all forms of Liberal Christianity, is not to be denied. And yet it is too plain to be denied that, running throughout the general mind, there are strong and increasing currents of sympathy with the fundamental principles which distinguish Liberal Christianity. There are multitudes who are actually Unitarians, and yet are unconscious of the fact. Every day it is becoming more and more evident that the presence and influence of Unitarianism, as a type of religious thought, is not to be measured by the number of Unitarians actually organized in religious societies bearing the Unitarian name. Popular prejudices blind the eyes of reason and block the way of progress, and are to be deplored. Prejudice is to be deplored, I say; but less on our account than on account of those who have the misfortune to lie under its influence; for bondage thereto is moral degradation. The popular mind is swayed by the influence of numbers, and is apt to be deterred by authoritative denunciation. If ten thousand persons believe in transubstantiation, endless hell torments, unconditional election, or a tri-personal deity, it is held by most minds to be safer to believe according

to the creed of the ten thousand, though it should confuse them and confound them, than to believe a simple and reasonable doctrine like that of the simple unity of God, while it is openly maintained only by a few, —perhaps ten persons instead of ten thousand. To my eyes, there is nothing sadder to witness than a feeble and timid mind bent and awed by this illegitimate pressure of numbers, or by the apprehension of social inconvenience,—so bent and awed thereby, that it yields the ground of truth it has reached, and falls back, cowed and cowering, into the ranks of the multitude who follow tradition rather than truth. Certainly, it is not anger which moves me when I see such persons; but rather pity. They do not properly belong to us, though they should coincide mainly with us in doctrine. On this account, indeed, it would be better for themselves to be with us. But seeing that we are a witnessing body as well as a worshipping body,—seeing that we are a body of worshippers bearing testimony to a paramount truth, now obscured by the prevalent ecclesiastical creeds, it requires minds of a certain measure of courage to stand in our ranks. An Unitarian worshipper must be one who can stand firmly on his own feet, so to speak, in a general community like ours. Now, the number of persons in any community who can stand thus firmly on behalf of their own convictions, is never very large. Men are prone to think and act in masses. We are all prone to yield to the social pressure around us. Sequaciousness is the rule. Simple independence, which calmly seeks the truth for its own sake,

and openly avows it, though it should be found on the side of the few rather than on that of the many, is much more rare. We must not be surprised, therefore, if we should not increase in numbers as rapidly as some other worshipping bodies. Such increase is not to be expected under the circumstances. At the same time it should be carefully kept in mind that our quiet fidelity, moral courage, and religious devotion, while bringing ourselves the blessing and joy of duty fulfilled, will be helpful to others also. Our light will be to them a light—a light leading them, likewise, to glorify our Father in heaven, by bearing open testimony to his truth, and yielding a glad obedience to his law.

In judging of our present condition, we must look to what is outward and visible, and take it into account. But there is more than this to be considered in making the full estimate. Our growth in personal religion is the chief thing to be regarded. All outward instrumentalities and all visible results are to be judged, as to their value, by the effects in character and life of the living souls concerned. Are we who worship here drawn nearer to God as the years pass over us? Are we growing into closer conformity with the mind and life of Jesus Christ? How is it with us as members of society and members of the household?—As citizens and traders?—As parents and children?—As masters and servants?—In these various relations and spheres of activity are we indeed seeking to do our part as Christians? In the various duties and responsibilities thereof, are we sincerely

striving to put our Christianity into life, and thus let our light shine? These, my friends, are the questions which will try us. They are the questions which must ultimately determine the value of all religious institutions.

Whatever changes may have come across my mind during the last twenty-five years, with regard to the relative prominence to be given to one or other doctrine of Christianity, no change has taken place as to the value of Christianity itself as a saving religion for man. I have preached the gospel as an authoritative declaration of the divine mind made through Jesus as the Messiah and messenger of the infinite and loving God, his Father and our Father, his God and our God. I have preached Christ as the manifested way and truth and life; as the mediator between God and man, through whom, by his teaching, spirit, and life, man is to be redeemed from the power of evil, delivered from sin, and lifted up into reconciliation and union with God. And this, God helping me, I propose still to continue to preach. My conviction of the supreme and inappreciable value of this simple and sublime gospel, so reasonable in all its doctrines, so quickening in its spirit, so practical in its operation, and so elevating in its whole influence and aim, grows deeper year by year. And it would be my highest satisfaction if I could deepen your convictions, likewise, to this effect.

For the generous consideration you have invariably given to my failings in the ministry of this place, I have now to thank you. Nor does it become me to

speaking harshly of yours. You have made ready allowance for the peculiarity and isolation of my ministerial position here. You have kept in mind the difficulty of such a position, and never have demanded the tale of bricks where there was no straw. We have no other Unitarian congregation as near neighbors. But looking at those least distant from us, we have seen several ministers settled and unsettled during the last twenty-five years. Frequent changes in the ministry is the rule on this continent. Now, I hold that oftentimes an advantage may accrue to all parties from a change of pulpit ministrations. Under certain circumstances, a change in his sphere of labor may be useful to a minister, and a change in the pulpit may be useful likewise to the pews. But of this I am well assured, that it is never well for a congregation to be for any lengthened period without a settled minister. Except in very rare cases, all its interests are sure to suffer. It is more wise, therefore, to avoid such changes, especially on the outposts of our faith. This consideration has weighed very much with myself, in relation to this congregation. Nothing in your conduct towards me could have ever induced the thought of a change; although the weakness and weariness of my own frame may have sometimes suggested it. The opportunities which have been presented to me for making a change, have always been met by a decision against it, without any hesitation on my part. And now, at the end of twenty-five years, I can say that I am entirely satisfied with the course I have

taken on such occasions ; entirely satisfied with my decision to remain here and labor among you in this place.

Twenty-five years of my life of active usefulness have now been passed here. None of us dare look forward to twenty-five years more ; nor is it wise to speculate on the future with any approach to confidence. The present time, only, is ours. I would urge you, therefore, as I would urge myself, to renewed fidelity in the present time. Let us all bear in mind that our Heavenly Father ever giveth a good future to those who use the present well. As individual living souls we have a prospect before us, sure and unfailing—a prospect of joy and life eternal to those who live faithfully according to their light, in the love and spirit of Jesus Christ. As a congregation and worshipping body of Christian disciples, we have an encouraging prospect before us, if we are simply true to our organization and to our distinguishing principles. The best and most progressive tendencies of the age are in our favor. And it only requires that we should be duly alive to the significance of our distinctive mission as Liberal Christians,—Christians, I mean, who give a liberal and generous interpretation to the gospel, as opposed to a narrow and contracted one,—to ensure good success for our society under the blessing of God. And if we are thus alive to the value of our faith and privileges, and true to our trust in relation thereto, our worshipping body will grow in strength, and abound in promise, year by year. To this end there must be

an active and generous co-operation as between minister and people, and among the people themselves ;—a co-operation carried on in a willing, ready, earnest and forbearing spirit, with a single eye to the welfare of the whole body, rather than for the satisfaction of any particular person or persons. Such a co-operation will lead to a ready surrender of self-will, and a glad acquiescence in any measures deliberately adopted by the general body. Thus working in the bonds of the charity which never faileth, the demon of discord can find no place among us, and the angel of concord will be our helper. Hope will grow and faith will be strengthened, where charity thus dwells. And with faith, hope, and charity abounding, the years, as they come and go to ourselves and to those who may succeed us here, will find all growing with a hopeful and joyful growth,—growing “up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together. . . , maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

SERMON II.

REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD.

“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God.”—*Acts* xx. 21.

THE apostles of Christ were men who made a deep and permanent mark upon the world. They scored the purpose of their mission deep into society, by touching the hearts and moving the affections of those whom they addressed and among whom they labored. And this, because they were themselves vital with the doctrines which they proclaimed. These doctrines did not lie in their minds as dead traditions or merely inherited opinions, like so much merchandise in a warehouse, to be retailed out as opportunity served. No. They were living forces in their souls as all truly received doctrines are—part and parcel of their life, and urging them to a communication thereof as an inevitable condition of their being. They could not be silent. They could not be idle. They were filled with the Holy Ghost, and these doctrines were

the spirit's forces working within them, urging them to speech and to activity.

Look at the apostle Paul. If ever there was a man who made his doctrine his life, surely there he is. In the book of Acts, and in the epistles which bear his name, we find some passages so obviously vital, that if we were to puncture them we should expect them to bleed. We see at once that it is no dry and formal teacher, repeating dead opinions and traditions, who stands behind the words uttered there, but a man who expresses his own inmost life. Read the passage before us, and note the context. Note that meeting and that parting. And note the sum of the testimony which he bore in his teaching at Ephesus:—"Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

These were the doctrines which moved the mind, filled the heart, and worked in the soul and life of the great apostle. To say that he saw and felt the paramount need of urging them would be superfluous, because it is so evident. We are to consider one of the two now—I mean "repentance toward God." The other we shall consider in the next discourse.

Repentance, you know, signifies a change of mind or purpose. And "repentance toward God," signifies *a change of mind Godward*. Now, whatever there may have been special in the apostle's time to call for a pressing presentation of this doctrine, it would be a great mistake to suppose that no necessity remained for it in our time. Repentance, rightly

understood, is a needed doctrine for all times. And this permanent necessity comes from the simple fact that at all times there are men—multitudes of men—whose minds are turned toward something else rather than God. The apostles had to deal with Gentiles degraded by the worship of pagan deities, and Jews who were sunk in formalism and national pride. And in view of these things doubtless they felt called upon to urge men *from* all such idols and forms, *to* the God who alone was the true God and the living God. Such a change *from* and *to* was, of necessity, the first call of the gospel; yea, it was the preparatory note sounded by the forerunner of the Lord. The word of the Baptist was: “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” But idolatry and formalism come stealthily on men in every age, and in various shapes. In Christendom we no longer see the visible idolatry of Athens or Ephesus, or the special formalism of the Pharisee of Jerusalem, drawing the minds of men away from the living God, and drying up the sources of the divine life. Idolatry now takes other forms, and formalism assumes other shapes. In our age men look to earthly Success and follow it as a God. They hold by barren traditions and usages, and allow these to stand in the place of a vital relation and conscious union with the Highest. Thus are men turned away from the Infinite Father—their most earnest look set in another direction, and the work of their hands following the sight of their eyes. Their

most eager thought and most persistent activity are directed otherwise than Godward.

What a mystery is the life of man ! It is a mystery strange and solemn. From the hour he opens his eyes to the light, to that in which he closes them for the grave, he shows himself the subject of inward forces, whose intricate workings baffle our most curious investigations. When the fearful power of will is put forth—that power so pregnant of results for weal or woe—we see the token of a moving force within, on which depends more than can well be named in words. And how these inward forces clash and war, making the soul a battle ground more awful than any outward Marathon or Marengo. The good we would, that we do not ; the evil which we would not, that we do. The inward conflict—here it is—between the good and the evil. Away through all the chambers of our being the sound is heard, and in the soul of a great and earnest man—a Paul, an Augustine, or a Luther—the echoes thereof roll in tones of thunder, utterly forbidding peace or rest until the evil be subdued and the Godlike victory won.

Take the lives of the mass of men, and consider them. Are they peaceful, serene, joyous, noble, in sympathy with all that is true, pure, lovely, and of good report, and willingly devoted to such cause as their leading work ? A question like this carries its own answer. We see that men's lives are not so. We see that they are filled with anxiety and unrest, and their prominent activity turned in another direc-

tion. Do any of you demur at this account of the matter, as unjust to humanity? I have no justification to render, other than what common observation and experience afford. I would appeal to the objector personally. Is he always undisturbed and at ease? Are his sympathies and activities uniformly directed to what is highest, purest, holiest, noblest, best? Who among us will say that this is his condition? Are not the best of us troubled by conflicts within, and do we not sometimes get weary in well doing? And, Oh, the deep sleep of indifference which falls upon many of us and multitudes of nominal Christians everywhere—the deep sleep of indifference in what relates to God and things Godlike! Away we go with swift and ready feet after our idols. In office and workshop, in store and counting-house, in business and politics, we render our worship thereto. But as to a clear and adequate discernment of the living God, and of his paramount claim of service on every thinking faculty and every working power, we have it not. This sleep of indifference deepens the longer it is left undisturbed. While in other directions the man is awake and active; toward God his eyes are closed and his hands idle.

Hence the need of repentance. Hence the pressing need of change of mind Godward. The face must needs be set in a new direction, a new purpose must needs fill the soul. With mind darkened and heart alienated, man cannot live for the kingdom of heaven. While apart from God we walk in sin, and

every day we cherish the sin, the veil of separation thickens. Our daily life may not lack interest and enjoyment. The prodigal had a certain delight in his way of living while he was spending the substance of his patrimony in riotous pleasure. But we all know the issue—the ultimate emptiness, unrest, and woe. And there is many a man and woman to-day, who, in their daily courses, think they can set God and all the distinctive claims which he has upon them aside, and pursue their own way without let or hindrance. But man or woman can never cheat God, nor evade the force of his supreme, all-comprehending law. The emptiness, the unrest, the woe are in store for all such neglect and indifference, and for every form of sin. We are not to measure the *amount* of our transgression to find out whether we are sinners. One act of sin makes a man a sinner, because it is an offence against the authority of the Infinite Majesty. The repetition of such acts, as I have already intimated, hardens and blinds us, and sets our thoughts and activities more decisively in a false direction.

The faithful needle swings ever to its pole. Disturb it as you will, its tendency is still the same. Let the shock of the winds and the shock of the waves come, it is always true to its cardinal point. Falsify it—for you may falsify it—and it no longer points to its pole, but to some other quarter. What is now to become of the ship? Currents of winds and currents of waters press her. Shall she fill her sails and speed swiftly and gaily over the waters, yielding to the

readiest and pleasantest currents? Or shall she trim her sails, and press her rudder to obey the falsified needle? In either case she is away from her haven, and playing fast and loose among shoals and rocks. The faithful needle is the type of the true soul; as the falsified one is the type of the soul that is off on some other quest than the quest of God. Oh, men and women, I beseech ye to mark the difference. Let us look into our own hearts, and mark what is the reigning love there. Let us observe whither our thoughts most readily and most directly tend. Let us note the prevailing direction of our activities. Is the love of our heart, is the thought of our mind, is the work of our hands toward God, or toward something else?

Every point in a circle has a point directly opposite. Against the north stands the south. Against the east stands the west. Every other point in the circle is nearer the north than the south point is. He who runs easterly or westerly will not have so far to turn to come north as he who runs southerly. Yet if he persists east or west, while his safe point is north, he will go wrong and be wrecked as surely as he who runs south. Repentance toward God—a change of mind Godward—herein lies our hope and spiritual safety. The farthest off wanderer will have most to change in his actual course, the nearest, least. But all will have the radical change to make—the radical change from the wrong course to the right one, from false to true, from evil to good, from some transient and illusory idol to the living God.

But how change? Can the drifting ship right herself? Never, certainly, while her company is unconscious. Man away from God on some mere earthly quest, cannot come back to him until he becomes conscious of his wandering and sin. And it is a most gracious provision of the infinite mercy that this power of consciousness never utterly quits him. The dissatisfaction is felt. The heart yearns. The conscience speaks, sometimes loud, and sometimes only in a whisper. In this gracious provision of our nature, we see the turning point of our hope and safety. Hereby the loving God still furnishes the straying soul with a line of guidance to bring it out of the labyrinth of sin. The Father still calls the wanderer. It was for his benefit that Christ came. Not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, the Lord Jesus entered on his mission. The voice of the Infinite Love is ever sounding in our ears. "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways and live?"—(*Ezek.* xviii. 23.) The Supreme Majesty of the universe appears as the Father of men, willing and waiting to receive every wanderer who sincerely turns his face toward him.

It is the goodness of God that leadeth to repentance. (*Rom.* ii. 4.) This is the motive force manifested first in that provision of our nature by which we become conscious of sin and alienation from God, and then in all the displays of goodness which the universe presents. Consider these as manifested in man, in his

varied gifts and endowments ; and in nature around us, —in the wondrous beauty and bounty of the external world. Then there are the disclosures of divine favor or grace, as made known in the Gospel, and illustrated by Jesus in his parable of the prodigal son. Herein we have the simple and touching doctrine of Christ himself, concerning reconciliation with God, or atonement. “ God commendeth his love toward us,” writes the apostle, “ in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,” (*Rom. v. 8.*) that is, he died on our behalf, not in our stead. God demands no innocent substitute for the guilty sinner. Theologians, who presume to pronounce what God ought and must demand, give him a substitute. All this, however, is man’s invention, not God’s requirement. It was not to make penitence in man produce a forgiving disposition in God that Christ died. That forgiving mind is eternally inherent in God, ready to go forth to the prodigal as soon as penitence is felt within him as a moving force. And it was to produce such penitence in man that Christ died. The spectacle of the cross, devoutly regarded, stirs our profoundest sympathies and subdues the soul unto penitence. It stirs that “ godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation.” (*2 Cor. vii. 10.*)

From the depths of penitence the soul rises to a new life. Through the divine process of repentance it reaches renewal. With its look set toward God, it sees all things in a new light. No longer running in a wrong direction, it no longer darkens its view by its

own shadow. Self and selfishness no longer obscure its vision, while it keeps its eye straight on the infinite truth and goodness. The weight of sin set aside, it is born to new freedom and new joy. It goes out to its daily work in a new spirit, and so toils in warehouse or elsewhere, that its very work becomes a worship, where, before, it was in sheer neglect of God, and rebellion.

Paul's first call to Jew and Gentile was "that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." (*Acts* xxvi. 20.) With a sincere change of mind toward God comes a change of ways. The course of the earthly life is guided by a landmark divine. Selfishness, neglect, earthliness of mind, the pettiness of folly and the meanness of every form of sin are by the process abjured and set aside; and the beauty of holiness and heavenly mindedness, of divine love and service, and of the wisdom which is from above, distinctly recognised. Penitence is not mere sorrow, as the sorrow of the world. Genuine repentance is not marked by downcast eye and relaxed hand. It looks steadily to God, and becomes strong and well resolved. Penitence, indeed, is a sorrow, but a sorrow for sin, a godly sorrow, a refreshing sorrow, a strengthening sorrow. It is this which worketh the repentance unto salvation—the repentance that is not to be repented of. It is this which lifts a man up to serenity and peace. God's ear is ever open to hear the faintest sigh. God's spirit pervadeth all space, concentrating itself with special power to raise

and rejoice every seeking heart. God's hand is always ready to help and lead the soul that looks to him. Truth, rectitude, holiness and love, these are the ways in which the renewed soul delights to walk. Looking over the wide domain of the earth it sees in every department of earth's work a sphere wherein God is to be served and glorified.

It is here and now that we are called to repentance and service. I can scan no man's heart to know what measure of change he needs. But this, we know, that wherever the ruling aim of life is apart from God, there the call presses for a change. And there the call is for *to-day*, not for to-morrow or any time future. Now is the accepted time—now the day of safety. Procrastination is self-deception and treason to the soul's supreme interests. How uncertain is the earthly life of man! A warning this that we should be faithful to-day to the work here given us to do. Twenty or thirty lives were extinguished last week by a crash on one of the running railroads. Doth not God speak to us all in calamities like this? And home to our own city a few days since, were the bodies of four young men brought, who on last sunday were as well as we are to-day, and as likely to live for many years to come. For more than an hour, we are told, they struggled for life amid the boisterous waters, but at last, yielding, they sank in death. I ask, not what the retrospect of any one's last hour was who may have been suddenly called away, it is too sacred for mortal scrutiny. But, my friends, young and old

suppose such a lot ours before to-morrow's sun should rise, what would be the character of our retrospect? It has been said, you know, that before the vision of the dying, in such circumstances, the whole of life is gathered up in miniature, so that it can be discerned at a glance. In such a case, my younger friends, how would it appear to you? And my elder friends, how would it appear to you? What has been your ruling aim in life heretofore? What is your ruling aim of life to-day? Has the leading thought of your mind been toward the great and loving God, or toward some other thing—some earthly and perishable idol? These are questions that any one may suggest, but no one an answer them for another. These are the questions upon which the most tremendous issues of human existence depend. There is but one way to life, one path to joy, one avenue to glory celestial and eternal, and this is found only through change of mind toward God, and serving him with single eye and with loyal and loving heart.

SERMON III.

FAITH TOWARD CHRIST.

“Testifying. faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”—*Acts* xx. 21.

It is sometimes said that the age of faith is past. This is said by a class of persons whom I cannot regard as the most comprehensive or profound in their way of thinking. It is said the age of faith is past, and now the age of reason has come. But it is a mistake to suppose that reason can supersede faith. Faith and reason abide together in the nature of man as mutual helpers. If it were said that the age of blind faith is past, I should say, with all my heart, be it so. But blind faith is not faith proper. It is superstition. It was blind faith which prevailed in Christendom some centuries ago, when the human mind in general was enveloped in darkness ; not a proper or intelligent faith. It surrendered itself without questioning to a humanly-devised authority which did not hesitate to contravene and contradict reason. Such a state of things could

no longer exist when the intellect was emancipated through the invention of printing, the revival of learning, the reformation of religion, and the more general diffusion of letters among the masses of the people. We can never dispense with faith. But it must be guided by reason in its exercise. Faith is an integral part of our nature. We act upon it every day in our daily living. Every one of us has his arrangements specially made or tacitly understood as to what he shall do on the morrow. Now all this is based on faith, for we have no positive proof that the sun will rise to-morrow at all. This may be the last day of earth for aught we can know positively. We have faith, however, that is, we have a settled reliance that it will rise to-morrow, because we have known it to rise every day in our past experience, and we have no reason to suppose that it will cease to rise with this day's rising. I say then, that it is a mistake to depreciate faith with the view of elevating reason. Reason and faith abide together as twin helpers in building up the fabric of man's moral and religious life.

Faith has a two-fold meaning, which it is needful to keep in view. There is a faith which signifies belief, and a faith which signifies trust. The one is of the intellect, and reached by logical process ; the other is of the heart, and comes by another and nearer way. Faith, as applied to Christ, carries this two-fold meaning. In one form it signifies belief in propositions concerning him, or a mere historical faith. In the other form it signifies trust in a living person, or proper re-

ligious faith. The first meaning of belief in Christ, as understood in the early apostolic times, was the belief in Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah of the Jews, and the acceptance of him as such. This is evident from the scope of the early apostolic preaching. "Therefore, let all know assuredly," said Peter, "that God hath made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ." This belief was produced in the first age mainly, or to a large extent, by the wonderful works which Jesus performed. He himself appeals to these works as proof of the divine character of his mission. "The works that I do in my Father's name," said he, "they bear witness of me." (*John x. 25.*)

But a faith of this kind is not an efficient faith. Belief in propositions concerning Christ, whether produced by appeal to his works or to his words, has but a secondary influence upon the life. To the discerning mind of this age his words are felt to be a greater power than his works. But the faith which is efficient comes from sympathy with the spirit and life of Christ, and abiding love of him through this sympathy. Such faith merges into trust and becomes identical therewith. It merges itself into a trust of the soul toward him which sways the inner nature and active life of the disciple. This faith in Christ, as way and truth and life, is what redeems the soul from the power of evil, and saves it from sin and the consequences of sin. We understand what it is to have trust in a skilful physician. In our bodily sickness, having faith in him, we surrender our own will and desire, and follow his pre-

scription, guided by his advice and order. Now when in things spiritual we are ready to surrender will and desire freely to Christ, as the great physician of the soul, then, and not till then, will he properly become and be to us a Savior and Redeemer.

Here I would ask you to note carefully the difference between believing in Christ and believing propositions about him. Thousands of souls and tens of thousands have been bewildered and made weak, tossed to and fro among logical formulas and theological subtleties through failure to make this distinction. We naturally desire to know all we can about Christ, and theologians have undertaken to instruct us. The results of their investigations are presented to us in various forms and enforced with various measures of sanction and authority. Do we ask what shall we do to be saved? The theologian, speaking in the interest of his party, is not content with saying believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. He will insist likewise that we believe in certain propositions about Christ, which are the results of his own investigations and inferential reasoning. He will say believe in Christ as God the Son, second person in the trinity, or believe in Christ as vicarious sacrifice, for it is thus only that thou canst be saved.

Now we must observe that belief in such propositions concerning Christ, is a different thing from simple belief in him as a living person whose life shone as a light in the world for our spiritual guidance and deliverance. When the ship at sea off our northern

coasts is enveloped in fog, the sound of the warning bell pierces the density to proclaim the danger which lies closely in the way. In such case the safety of the ship is not to be found in any theory or belief which her company may hold concerning the composition or the construction of the bell. On such matters there may be diversity of belief. Clearly the ship's safety lies in her giving due heed to the sound of the bell and shaping her course accordingly. When a benighted company of travellers, lost and bewildered in the shifting sands of an Asian desert or the drifting snows of an American wilderness, sees through the darkness a shining light which promises guidance and relief from the peril of their position—thus bewildered and lost, their safety does not depend on any theory or belief which they or any of them may have concerning the antecedent condition or origin or nature of the light. Their safety lies in simply following the guidance of the light until they reach the relief and safety which it indicates. So it is with respect to Christ and theories about Christ. We must distinguish between them, and take care not to confound the one with the other when we come to the matter of the faith which saves. I do not deny the importance of knowing all we can about Christ, and having fixed views and settled theories concerning him, his office and his work. On the other hand, I affirm that such fixed views are needful to an intelligent belief in him. Our spiritual safety, however, consists not in believing such theories, but simply in believing in him.

Farther, let us consider what faith in Christ is in its amplitude and significance to us, his disciples at the present day. I say, then, that it means a due recognition of the whole Christ, and heartfelt trust in him. You may ask why I say the whole Christ. My friends, I say so, because it is quite common to have a fragmentary Christ presented to the Christian believer. How often may we hear it stated that it is the *dying* Christ alone that is to be relied on for salvation,—thus leaving out of view the light of the divine life which Jesus lived on earth. This trust in a fragmentary Christ is too common throughout Christendom. The dying Christ is pointed to, and that one portion of Messiah's manifestation is presented to induce all Christians to look there, and rest there only. As against this mistake we must bear in mind that we are not authorized in setting aside any portion of Christ's manifestation. We are to have faith toward the whole Christ, faith in him as teacher and example, light of the world and guide of men, faith in him as image of God, faith in him as dying Savior, and faith in him as risen Savior.

Yes, we are required to have faith in Christ, as teacher and example, looking to his word as illustrated in his life, and giving all reverent heed thereto. He was set as exemplar and guide. The perfect manhood is to be found in "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (*Eph. iv. 13.*) He is presented as the type of perfected humanity, of humanity reconciled to God and brought into communion with him—the type, in short, of divine humanity.

We are likewise to have faith in Christ as visible image of God. God in his absolute being no man hath seen or can see. But in Jesus, his visible image, we see the brightest manifestation of God that can be seen of men. In Jesus, as we see him going about through the villages of Judæa and Galilee, uttering his heavenly words and doing his wonderful works of power and mercy, we see the great and infinite God whom the highest human thought could never reach nor comprehend—we see him manifested, and brought within such limitations as will enable man to form conception of him, sufficient for all purposes of man's spiritual guidance, help and safety.

And we are to have faith, also, in Christ as the dying Savior. He died on the cross, the just on account of the unjust that he might win us and bring us to God. We must, so far as we can, penetrate the spiritual significance of that death on the cross, and not allow our sensibilities merely to be moved by the wounds of the body or the flowing of the blood. This, indeed, is the very least part of the death of Christ. Those representations of physical suffering which are so commonly made use of to move our more superficial sensibilities are but poor devices to serve a poor purpose. If we can discern the deep spiritual significance of that death, it becomes a saving power to our souls. If we can discern the self-surrender, the pure sacrifice of love in that dying of the just on account of the unjust, and if, by contemplating the spirit which led thereto, we are induced to go forth in a like spirit,

bearing the stamp of that sacrifice upon our lives, showing therein a willingness to do and suffer in the cause of truth and duty, of God and man, although death should stare us in the face—then, I say, we most worthily interpret the death of Christ, and put our faith therein to most fruitful use.

Then, again, we are to have faith in him as risen Savior. For he not only died, but rose again from the dead. The sealed sepulchre could not hold the Lord. Most blessed assurance this to us! “Because I live,” said he, “ye shall live also.” “I go to prepare a place for you.” This is his assurance to all faithful souls.

Faith toward Christ thus involves and signifies a heartfelt reception of the whole Christ. And it means, besides, a heartfelt trust or soul’s assurance in him as the living and present Christ. We are so bound up in sense that it is difficult for us to realize anything as actually existing which is not apparent to sense. Christ, since he ceased to move about in human form on our planet, has ceased to be visible to human eyes. We must believe in him, nevertheless, as the living and present Christ, spiritually discerned, and not merely as the past Christ of history. He lived in the past, spoke his wonderful words and did his wonderful works on earth eighteen centuries ago, was crucified on Calvary, ascended into the heavenly sphere, and there he still liveth. Our faith in Christ must be a faith in him thus existing as a living Lord and present friend. We are so shut up in sense, however, that it is difficult for

us to conceive, even, how it is that Christ should exist in the spiritual world and have a spiritual connection with his disciples now. But unless the Gospel is a fable, the Christ that lived on earth in bodily form eighteen centuries ago, lives in spirit to-day in the heavens. Why should we limit spiritual existence with the limitations that belong to our fleshly condition? The pure spirits of loving souls, who have departed this life in Christ, still exist. Their death was only of the body, from which the spirit disengaged itself to ascend to the higher sphere. And such spirits may be very near us, even beside us this hour. They may know all that we say and do, although we cannot discern them. And so doth Christ live, a present Lord and friend to all disciples, to every one who seeks his loving fellowship.

Consider a moment the moral effect, the spiritual and practical power of such faith in Christ as I have now indicated. There is no one who reflects upon his own experience, who watches the motions of his own mind, that does not know how lawless his thoughts become and how lawlessly his imagination wanders hither and thither into the most forbidden regions. Now when we take Christ as a living master and present friend, and have such faith in him as leads us to surrender our will to his law, and our souls to his guidance; then the full power of his pure spirit falls on our spirit, illuminating our lives and chastening our imaginations, "casting down every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God," as the

apostle saith, "and bringing every thought to the obedience of him." (2 *Cor.* x. 5.) Moreover, every one knows by his own experience how difficult it is, in the common business of life, to adjust many apparently trifling concerns to the clear satisfaction of the conscience. For Christ has not given us a code of laws, but he has shown forth a life, through which comes a moral power and guidance. Hence we are sometimes at a loss to know how we should act in this or that emergency. Now, if we take Christ for guide, having faith in him as living master and present friend, believing that he is looking on, so to speak, we may soon reach a right decision in all such matters. There is scarcely any perplexity that comes upon us, which we may not adjust to the satisfaction of the conscience, if we simply consider how Christ would look upon it. And thus regarding ourselves as in his presence, and acting clearly as in his view, we may feel safe in the rule that whatsoever his pure eye would not sanction is to be avoided under all circumstances. Then, again, in times of temptation and trial, this faith in Christ, this trust in him as a present and living friend, furnishes divine help and solace. For we know that he was tempted as we are, yet without sin. We know, too, that he was subjected to severe trial and anguish of spirit, an anguish more deep and lacerating in his case than in that of ordinary mortals with their duller sensibilities. And yet in the time of his deepest anguish and severest trial, we know how ready he was to say: "Father, not my will but thine be done."

And throughout our whole life this faith in Christ, which is of the heart, this trust in him, if cherished by us, will penetrate the soul to the centre of its being, as an animating principle, moving it toward God and all Godlike thoughts and deeds.

Faith in Christ, then, I say as I close, makes the Lord's presence near, even here, and with us wherever we go. We can pass into no condition, we can enter no circumstances where that presence will not cheer and bless us. In the open plain of active daily life it will lead us about doing good. In the still garden of suffering and sorrow it will inspire us to say: "Father, not my will but thine be done." On the exposed mountain of temptation, where the besetting adversary suggests evil in the whisper of every passing wind, it will strengthen us to rebuke the tempter and turn with faithful worship of the soul to God. When the cross of earthly neglect, disappointment or persecution is placed upon our shoulders, it gives us courage to bear it, as Christ did, although a Calvary be full in view. And when the eye of flesh is closing to sight of earth with all its joys and its sorrows, its hopes and its fears, its projects and its prospects, it reveals to the clear eye of the spirit the blessed realm of immortal existence. Even when flesh and sense are weakest it gives a victory which overcomes the world.

SERMON IV.

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT.

“Jesus said, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.”—*Matt.* xxii. 37, 38.

OUT of the heart of man, writes the Hebrew sage, are the issues of life. And this saying of the sage is verified by all human experience. We know that the deepest and most effective springs of human activity are to be found in the affections. The right direction of these, therefore, becomes of the first importance toward a proper order of life. The great and leading want of men is a ground principle of life, something which shall abide with them as a perpetual root of motive, putting forth its forces through the various branches of thought, feeling and activity. Without some such abiding ground principle for his help and guidance, man is like a stray float on the broad river of existence, sometimes tossed wildly over the rapids, sometimes stranded helplessly on the shoal, and

sometimes projected into a false channel. Without some such principle, life cannot have any proper comfort or satisfaction, for it cannot have any proper aim. A life without a fixed purpose cannot be otherwise than a wretched one. It is wretched even to the thoughtless man who does not recognise his want—it is wretched, if for no other cause than this, that he cannot recognise his want, nor be conscious of the grandeur, meaning, and capacity of a human life. To the more reflecting man it must be still more wretched, for he knows his want, and can scan the cause thereof in his own feeble will, made feebler every day through his own lack of fidelity. Let a man have his purpose fixed and it gives steadiness to his bearing—it gives him a positive character. I do not say that it elevates him morally, for it is quite possible that his fixed purpose may not have a high moral stamp upon it. A ship may be steady on her course with rudder set and sails filled, but if her compass be false she is only sailing steadily to a wrong point or to actual destruction. So in life a man may be steering by a false compass and in a false course—he may have all his faculties strained, and his ruling desires set, steadily bearing on a false purpose—false, I mean, when considered as the leading purpose of a human life.

But the moral safety or the moral ruin of a man depends on the character of his life's purpose—on the quality of his leading love. Show me a man whose ground principle of action is base—whose purpose in life is low, selfish and worldly—whose heart is set on

the transient shows of life, its vulgar fashions, ambitions and acquisitions, and I see one who is pressing to his own ruin. It does not in any wise mend the matter to see him delighted in his success, and confident in his course. This only serves to exhibit his blindness more clearly, and reveal with more certainty the darkness of his moral apprehension. By the eye of a larger and wider wisdom it is seen to be the groundless confidence of folly, for it is the ignoring, or setting aside of the vital realities of the universe for the poor apparitions of an imagination misled by the pressure of exaggerated and unlawful desire. The first requisite of a man toward a safe and elevated way of living, toward a noble and holy life, is a ground principle of life which sets him face to face with what is highest and best, noblest and holiest in the universe—which unveils truth, justice and love, and presents them in their most majestic and attractive forms—which unfolds all moral and spiritual loveliness to kindle the soul's deepest and divinest desires—which holds these high moral verities, these lasting and most lovely spiritual realities, forever clearly in view, and which by this unveiling and unfolding, this kindling and quickening, this clear and unwearied presentation, throws all that is base into the shade, or lets light upon it only that its baseness may be more distinctly marked; and at the same time stimulates to an effort that is untiring in the direction and for the attainment of things so true, so just, so lovely, and of such lasting good report.

This, I say, is the first requisite of a man toward a noble and holy life. And we find it clearly indicated in the answer of Jesus in our text :—“ Master, which is the great commandment ?” Jesus said, “ thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.” Here it is directly laid down by the Lord Christ that love toward God is to be the first command for our life-guidance—the ground principle of life to men. From this come light, strength, and joy to human life, hope, holiness and everlasting safety. It is only through *love* to God that we can render prompt and cheerful obedience to the *will* of God. An obedience may be rendered through fear, but this, we know, is not the highest nor the most acceptable service. It is the obedience of constraint, not the obedience of delight. An obedience rendered through fear is an irksome service—one that we would willingly avoid if we dare. An obedience rendered through love is a glad service—a joy and privilege we would not part with. The love of God, then, comes to make life’s burdens light. It comes to make the way of duty easy. It comes to make the path thereof bright with the joy of a free and joyous service. It comes to lift all service of God out of the sphere of compulsion, and place it in the category of privilege. It comes as a holy spur to our activity, rousing all latent and flagging energies, showing them how they may work, and rejoice in their work. It comes to bring man face to face with the

Father in filial confidence, and to open up the wide field of the divine perfections as the anchorage of his trust. It comes to bridge the chasm which separates the finite nature of man from God's infinitude, and supplies the ladder by which the heart of faith may scale the heavens.

The mystics find their all in all here. Resorting to the writings of the loving disciple, they find in his deep and mystical pages the meat and drink which their souls hunger and thirst for. For there they read of that new and wonderful birth of the soul to God which Nicodemus could not understand. (*John* iii. 5, 9.) There they read of Christ as the bread of life to believers, which so many of his own disciples stumbled at, and thought an hard saying. (*John* vi. 48, 60.) There they read of Jesus as the vine, and the disciples as the branches. (*John* xv. 1-5.) There they read of that last prayer of the Lord where he beseeches the Father "that all the disciples may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; . . . that they may be one as we are one." (*John* xvii. 21, 22.) There too, in the Epistles, they read of God as love, essentially and substantially; there they read that "love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God; while he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love." (1 *John* iv. 7, 8.) In contemplating these things, mystical persons find their highest delight—a delight transcending all other delights. By devoting themselves to such con-

templations, sometimes within cloistered walls, and sometimes outside of them, sometimes under the shadow of Catholic forms, sometimes under the shadow of Protestant forms, and sometimes in total independence of forms—by devoting themselves to such contemplations they seek to realize and to feel their union with the Infinite—they strive so to merge themselves in God that all motions of self-will shall be annihilated, and no motions of will known but those which beat in ready and joyful harmony with the will divine. In this search and effort Thomas à Kempis and Henry More, Madame Guyon and Elizabeth Fry, stand on common ground. In looking at the lives of such persons and the ground principle thereof, we see the peculiarities of Romanist and Protestant and Quaker subordinated, and the life of love shining as the chief mark.

That there is a broad and lasting basis of truth in the mystical view of religion we cannot deny. Antecedent to any apostolic writing, we find a warrant for it in the nature and experience of the human soul as manifested and set forth in the most ancient systems of thought, philosophical and religious, Oriental and Grecian. You will observe I do not say there was Christian mysticism, but simply mysticism—a search of the human soul for the Infinite—a longing to merge all conscious existence in the great soul of the universe. And Christ came to shed light on the search, and fill up the void for every sincere and seeking spirit. He came, bearing the highest message of

love from heaven to earth,—he came, himself this highest message of love, making known a God who was essentially love, and inviting all men, wanderers and prodigals though they were, to come and taste of the divine grace and mercy. He came teaching the mystery of the new birth of the soul to God through an awakened love toward him—through the divine spirit passing into its darkened chambers, and by the purifying force thereof driving out all less worthy loves and baser desires, and supplanting them with motives drawn from the nature of God himself. He came with the promise of the Holy Spirit to comfort and guide, to uplift and sustain men, in all the circumstances of their earthly lot. He came showing men how they might become one with him, and through this become one with God;—thus satisfying the highest and widest desire of the soul by lifting it out of the limitations of earth and sense, and installing it in heavenly places where it may grow in God, and rejoice in God for evermore.

The peril of mysticism comes from its shutting men up too exclusively in contemplation. Religious contemplation severed and kept apart from religious activity is fraught with danger. In this case it is as likely to strangle love to God as to cherish it. If we live for ourselves alone, thinking only of our own soul's condition and welfare, the love of self is likely to keep as strong a hold within us as the love of God. God, in his own nature and ways, links thought and activity together, and marries love as a sentiment and

love as a principle of activity, so closely in one that they cannot be put asunder. A proper love to God leads to an imitation of God, and thus involves the union of contemplation and action. God does not extend himself throughout the universe as essential love contemplating himself and meditating his own happiness. The love which is the central principle of his nature works outward continually, and fills heaven and earth with agencies and instrumentalities to confer happiness and joy on his creatures. It writes itself in the stars and upon the earth. It throws its forces into the air which surrounds us, and into the ocean which washes every continent. It builds up the wondrous structure of the human body, and breathes vitality into the more wondrous structure of the soul. It comes in to adjust and control the disturbing forces which human free will creates, and by going forth as truth upholds it in perpetual beauty, and by going forth as justice asserts its everlasting claim. It is the fundamental and organizing force of what we call providence, or that divine oversight and guidance which presides over all affairs, and beneficently regulates their issues. It was the originating motive, and is still the central power of the gospel of Christ, redeeming men from iniquity and winning them to heaven. Thus doth God's love work—an active power in the universe, creating all, upholding all, directing all and blessing all.

As against the danger of a mere contemplative religion we have all the leading tendencies of our age and

country for helpers. The prevailing type of American life in this nineteenth century would never originate monasteries. It lifts warehouses and factories and countinghouses into prominence, where men work brain and body nigh unto death, not quiet cloisters where they may repose apart from the common world. The saints of our age must grow up amid the turmoil of busy life, and exposed to the close and heated contact of commercial competition, and their protection against the varied perils of this busy life of commercial competition must be found in the leading injunction of the Lord Christ to love God with heart, soul and mind—to love God with such love supreme as will expel from the heart the blasting passions which the lust for power and gain creates, and which would raise up Mammon as a rival there. When they come to lay hold on this injunction for purposes of use—when they come to draw it forth from the region of undefined sentiment for purposes of practical application—God rises before mind, heart and soul, as perfect truth, perfect justice, perfect purity, perfect love. All these coalesce, and become incorporated in our idea of God, and inseparable from our conception of the great Father in heaven. To love him, therefore, involves the love of these—the love of truth, of justice, of purity, of love. It involves the love of these above all things else. Thus intelligible, searching and comprehensive is the first and great commandment of the Lord.

As a principle of life, this commandment has ob-

viously a twofold action. It operates negatively, as a restraint from sin, and positively, as an incitement to holiness.

It operates negatively, I say, as a restraint from sin. For, consider God as absolute truth. To serve certain purposes of convenience, we mark off truth into classes or kinds, as truth mathematical, truth moral, and truth religious, or truth as cognizable by the intellect, by the conscience and by the soul. And then, again, we have to mark off and distinguish between truth absolute and truth relative, or truth as it is in itself, and truth as it stands related to our consciousness. But when we come to think of God, we can only think of him as truth simple and absolute, pervading all the realms of the universe, guiding all worlds and all systems of worlds in the exact line of their orbits throughout infinite space, so that onward they move throughout the ages—cycle and epicycle unerring—the very types of everlasting truth in everlasting motion. And this palpable truth in the physical domain of the universe is but the symbol and shadow of the truth which prevails supreme in the moral domain. Falsehood can have no existence in connection with the thought or deed of God. He is truth pure, perfect, absolute. Now consider for a moment the negative effect which the love of truth in this form would have upon us. It would be like a sentinel in the inner temple, suspicious of every appearance of falsehood, and challenging every approach thereof. It would be like a reserved guard

behind the sentinel, clearsighted, ready and powerful to expel every intrusion of falsehood, no matter under what guise of expediency or profit it might come. Thus would it act as a restraining power, keeping us from all sins of falsehood, and leading us to oppose it as the foe direct of God. As a restraining power it would penetrate our daily method of living, shaming us from falsehood everywhere, at home and abroad, in trade and in politics, in all the relations and various concerns of life.

Or, consider God as supreme and omnipresent justice, and consider farther the effect which the love of this justice, lodged within us, would have in holding us back from participating in that which is unjust. In this case it takes up its post as sentinel likewise, and becomes a reserved guard too. Through its influence conscience becomes thoroughly clearsighted and tender, and wholly sanctified unto the Lord. It fortifies us against the approaches and assaults of those subtle forms of temptation which address themselves to our selfishness, and thus gloss over the wrong. It will not permit us to tolerate any tricks in trade, any mean devices in politics, or the doing of any injury to another in body, mind or estate.

Or, again, consider God as perfect purity, and consider farther the effect which the love of this purity fixed in our souls must have upon us. The grossness of sensuality retires before its divine and searching glance. All forms of impurity and intemperance become loathsome to us; and we shrink instinctively away from them. To the pleadings of sensual desire,

the love of purity speaking from within replies with Joseph of old, "How can I do this wickedness and sin against God?"

Thus does the love of God act negatively, or as a restraining power, keeping us back from the various forms of sin. But besides and beyond this it has a powerful positive influence in stimulating us to holiness and righteousness of life. Its demands are not satisfied by simply holding us back from falsehood, injustice, impurity and the like, but it urges us to seek truth, rectitude and purity of living—it urges to seek and secure all holy and godlike virtues, so that itself, the *love* of God, may become embodied in the *life* of man. Through its leading and guidance we are lifted from lower to higher, until we are brought into union with God.

Call up once more the idea of God as absolute truth, omnipresent justice and perfect purity, and consider a moment the positive influence of the love of God—of God, as identical with each and all of these—in stimulating us to loyalty and reverence thereto. These can no longer stand before us as indifferent matters. They are identified with God, and disloyalty to them is disloyalty to God. The love of God urges us to loyalty, and is not satisfied short of the perfect service of every faculty. Truth becomes a sacred thing in our eyes, justice becomes sacred, purity of heart and every like virtue become very sacred. These things become the pearls of great price to be sought and secured at all earthly sacrifice and earthly hazard.

We can no longer fall back in apathy or cowardice from moral conflicts, or pause to consult our own convenience or inconvenience where the interests of truth and justice are at stake. It is not because "honesty is the best policy" that we will practise honesty, but because honesty and every form of truth and justice are of God, and to be sought and practised for their own sake, and through love of him. Where this love does not exist, to pause and consider in any matter of moral conflict is to lose ground, for selfishness can ply its arguments fast on the hesitating soul, and hold it easily in thralldom. But where love is in the heart, while we muse the fire burns, and we rise up with souls freshly fortified, and desires newly kindled for things true, just, and lovely. Amid evil report and good report we pursue our search for these, patiently encountering and bravely overcoming all opposition. Earthly loss does not discourage us. Obloquy does not alarm us. Prison doors carry no terror to our hearts. We have the divine impelling force within, in the love which casteth out fear.

Some one, however, may say, what is this but a love of moral qualities? I answer, it is just this—it is a love of moral qualities in the infinite perfection thereof—it is the love of supreme moral excellence, and I aver that there can be nothing in heaven or on earth, more worthy of love. But I answer farther that they are not to be regarded as simply abstract qualities, but attributes made concrete, and actively manifested in a personal being. For man must have a personal

God. A God of mere abstract qualities—a God impersonal—cannot be a God adequate to the wants of humanity. And farther, still, I answer that it is in the Christian idea of God as a Father we find the object which wins most directly and forcibly upon our love. The contemplation of an abstraction cannot make any proper appeal to the affections. Nor can the contemplation of a distant being, seen merely in the light of law, very deeply move the heart. The manifestation of God in nature is impressive to the appreciating spirit. Wonder steals upon the thoughtful mind as it surveys the great and changing operations which nature presents. And this feeling, I believe, never wholly passes away; I suppose no degree of familiarity with nature can entirely cast this out. At the end of a life-time we watch the bursting bud and opening flower, instinct with life, with scarcely less wonder than when in earlier years we first observed it. And the eye of three-score years and ten, as it looks up to the twinkling and living star—twinkling and living with the fire of perpetual youth—sees in it a mystery as great, or greater, than when first in infancy it gazed upon that shining speck. How the spirit of man in its best hours yearns to know the meaning of all this! How the spirit of man in its most earnest moods has sought to penetrate the meaning and solve the mystery of the universe! Hemmed in by its environments, and baffled by its natural limitations, the human mind in its impatience has sometimes beaten against the bars of its cage until it fell back weak and helpless.

The universe was radiant with meaning, but this met with various interpretations, and no voice articulate and audible came out from its depths to solve the secret or settle the question. One mind saw in the universe its own cause—saw no room nor occasion for a cause beyond itself. It was at once the source and product of its own energy. God there was none, unless we accept all things as God. Sometimes this thought obtained expression as atheism, and sometimes as pantheism—as a false pantheism I should say. For when we speak of pantheism we should distinguish that which is false from that which is true. The false pantheism teaches that all things are God, but the true pantheism is that God is in all things. “Of him, and through him, and to him are all things,” saith the apostle. Another mind saw in the universe the result and product of a cause beyond itself, and confessed a God—a God independent of the universe, and the creator of the universe. The expression of this thought is theism. The apostle writes it in this form: “The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.” But this thought, again, was sometimes held as simply accounting for the origin of things without reference to any continued sustaining power or personal interest of the Creator. Some held that God set the universe in motion in some such way as a machinist sets a machine in motion, to be henceforth worked by its own power and guided by its own laws. This view gives the universe a distant Creator, and presents to the

mind of man an aggregation of fixed laws as the sovereign disposer of humanity, and all that humanity can recognise.

But none of these views can meet the natural wants, the instinctive yearnings of the human race. Certainly atheism cannot do it, which says there is no God. Certainly that pantheism cannot do it, which says that all things are God, and personal God there is none. Nor can any expression of theism do it, which regards God as a Creator merely, and places him at a distance from man; or which presents an aggregation of known and fixed laws merely, as the sovereign ruler of the universe. None of these views, I repeat, can meet and answer the natural wants—the instinctive yearnings of the race. For none of them present any object on which the human affections can rest, and to which they can cling. Until, therefore, the human race can eliminate from its own constitution, and thoroughly discard from its apprehension those affections which now form so large, so prominent, so essential and so sacred a part of its being, it cannot accept or be satisfied with any of these views. But to eliminate these affections from the constitution of human nature would be to destroy its identity. So long, then, as the human race exists, the existence of these, its inherent natural affections, will bear testimony against atheism, against pantheism, against any merely theistic views which place God at a distance from man, or enthrone a body of natural laws in the chief seat of the universe.

Can there be any reasonable doubt touching this

matter? I think not. It does not affect the root of the question to say that some minds have rested in these views, and that some minds still rest in them. For in this case two considerations are suggested:— 1st. Whether there be not some peculiarity about such minds which makes them exceptional;—and 2nd. Whether they do really rest in them, and have satisfaction. In speaking of the wants of the race as a whole we cannot allow the peculiarities of exceptional minds to nullify the general rule. And then, again, with respect to all who hold such views it is fairly to be questioned whether they do indeed rest in them, and find that satisfaction which their spirits seek. It is fairly to be questioned whether the experience of such persons, even under the most favorable circumstances, does not frequently bear witness to their deficiency. Holding any of the forms of thought to which I have referred, the serious mind must betimes feel sadly perplexed in view of the universe, and the order of events in human experience. Looking at the face of nature in the gorgeous beauty of a summer day, or the mild grandeur of a starry night, he may feel himself delighted and soothed, but then if all his thoughts are awake and active he will remember that he is alone and anomalous there—spiritually alone, I mean—that tree and star cannot answer any of the deep questions of his heart, and that the law which grows the plant, and rolls the orb, cares nothing for him any more than for the clod which he crushes under his foot. How cheerless is this thought, and yet his view cannot lift

him beyond it. Standing in contact with any of the more trying events of human experience—by the bed of the dying, or by the bier of the dead—he can see no meaning in the event, nor can he realize any help to sustain him in the trial, or any consolation. It may be that he sees no arbiter but a blind fate, or it may be that he sees no ruler but a body of natural laws, and by none of these is the mystery of bereavement explained, or the pressing burden of sorrow lightened. The heart sinks while the tear starts in the eye. The whole soul cries out for some help, some light, some consolation. But the cry is vain. No help, no light, no consolation comes. The no-God of atheism, the all-God of pantheism, the God of bald theism who is a distant sovereign, the unswerving laws of nature,—at a crisis like this—all these are alike heedless, all alike dumb.

It is just here that the Christian idea of God shines forth with signal splendor, and is seen invested with a world of meaning. This idea is comprehensive, embracing all the actual truth contained in the other views, and much more besides. It contains, besides, that which touches the heart, and interests the affections. It presents a most loving and attractive God, and thus challenges and wins our love in return. According to the Christian idea, God is not a Creator merely, not a Sovereign merely, not a Lawgiver merely, not all of these combined merely, but *a Father* also. He is “God our Father,” as the apostle so often writes. Our Lord himself dwelt with special

delight on this idea—in his intercourse with God constantly addressing him by this close and tender name. I do not say he was the first to proclaim it. The Hebrews had it, and David out of the fulness of his heart could cry: “blessed be thou Lord God of Israel, our Father.” (I *Chron.* xxix. 10.) God, to serve ulterior purposes of his providence, revealed himself to the Hebrew people by special methods, and the devout hearts among them were touched with the filial feeling, and regarded him as a parent. Still this was not the prominent idea of their religious system. Love to God was, indeed, enjoined therein, but it is to be noted that the first four books of the Bible were written before the call to do so appeared in the Hebrew Scriptures. It is in the last of the books commonly attributed to Moses that the injunction to love God finds its first record. In the Hebrew system the idea of God as Sovereign and Lawgiver was the prominent one; the leading idea of the Mosaic dispensation was that of *law*; while it is the distinction of the Christian dispensation that its leading idea is that of *love*. Hence our Lord did not so much set forth God as Sovereign and Lawgiver, as the Parent of the human race—as a Father impelled by his parental love to save his straying and sinning children from woe and moral ruin.

This idea of God answers the deepest wants of the race as none other can. When God is presented to man as a parent, filled with a father’s love for his human offspring, he becomes an object on which our best affections can rest, and to which they can cling.

He differs from the impersonal God of pantheism as a living soul, beaming full with humane and active affections, differs from the tree or the star. He differs from the distant or abstract God of mere theism, as a parent who lights up his household with his personal presence and love, differs from the sculptured marble form, or from the carefully framed code of laws suspended there. The soul that rightly recognises and accepts this idea of God is relieved from doubt and perplexity in view of the stern laws of the universe, and the trying events of human experience. The soul rightly imbued with the filial spirit finds, indeed, that the love which comes therefrom is sufficient to cast out all fear, and every feeling akin thereto. A man occupying his own stand-point in the universe may look upon all the glories and wonders before him—he may look upon the trees growing, the mountains heaving, the ocean rolling, the orbs of heaven moving through space in the fixed march of their magnificent order—he may look upon all this, and instead of being oppressed with the sense of his own littleness and spiritual loneliness, in presence of such rigorous and stupendous operations, the thought of God as his Father inspires him with a sense of greatness, and assures him of spiritual sympathy and companionship. The earthly mountains, vast as they are, the heavenly orbs vaster still, which he looks upon, and can recognise, cannot, either of them, recognise him—they cannot even recognise their own existence. In virtue of the living conscious spirit, then, which the Father breathed into

him, his child—in virtue of the spiritual connection thus established with the Creator of the material universe, he feels himself greater than the material universe. And the cold aspect of fixed and remorseless law which the universe presents is cheered and warmed by the word of love which has sounded from the central point of all being, saying: “behold a Father is here who loves and cares for his children.” This utterance of love coming through Jesus, who was the word incarnate—the highest expression of the divine love, and completest embodiment of the divine character ever manifested to humanity—gains strength, distinctness, and widespread meaning from him. “The glory of God shone in his face.” So completely did he show forth in his own person the paternal character of God that he could say to his disciple “he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” The man who is profoundly penetrated with the divine meaning of this revelation, though forsaken by every earthly friend, though the whole human race were swept from the surface of the globe, and not a heart left to beat in sympathy with his own, could still stand in the midst of the desolation and say, ‘I am not alone’—“I am not alone, for the Father is with me.”

Thus have I spoken concerning the love of God as a principle of life to man—the love of God as a God of infinite moral perfection—of God as a God, personal and paternal. I have just said that Jesus came to show us the Father. He came so to exhibit the divine character to men that their hearts might be won to

God, and to that blessed reconciliation with him which is the redemption of the soul. He came, the impersonation of the divine love, presenting God to our hearts in the most attractive form, and calling on us to love him who first loved us; thus from his own divine flame kindling the divine flame in human hearts. But in noticing this we are reminded of another thought which we must notice before we close. We are reminded that Christ, the beloved son of the Father—the moral image of God to men—has identified himself with humanity—especially with humanity in its weak and suffering forms—thus giving emphasis to his declaration concerning his second great commandment which he said was like unto the first. Here we see how love to God as a principle of life immediately touches all questions of social economy, and furnishes a ready key to their solution. In view of the two memorable commandments of the Lord we may safely say with Pascal, that “two plain laws, the love of God and of our neighbor, might be more effectual in regulating the whole Christian community than all political institutions.” (*Pasc. Thoughts* xxviii.) Love to man we may style philanthropy if we will. But it is a branch of piety, having its root in the great central point of all holy living, and standing before us as an injunction of the Lord Christ. “Inasmuch as ye did it unto *them* ye did it unto *me* ;” and “inasmuch as ye did it *not* unto them ye did it *not* unto me” are words of permanent and priceless worth, and, standing on the record as they do, they should put to

silence all cavil against man-ward forms of piety, and shame away all lack of earnestness therein. In the divine economy of the gospel, the weak, the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed, the neglected,—these classes of men can never for a moment be shut off from view. If to serve any temporary purpose of social or political expediency we are tempted to do so, just so far do we shut off from view the Lord Christ himself—just so far do we seek to annul the Christian message, and show our disloyalty to its vital law. That love of God which the gospel urges and insists upon, is no partial or restricted sentiment, which works complacently within traditional or conventional limits. It covers and comprehends love to man as man. Its perpetual test question is: if we “love not our brother, whom we have seen, how can we love God whom we have not seen?” (I *John* iv. 20.)

Now may he, who hath all hearts in his hand, direct and draw our hearts unto himself; and unto him, the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory, through Jesus Christ, for ever and ever.

SERMON V.

THE BIBLE, THE RECORD OF A PROGRESSIVE REVELATION.

“ God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.”—*Heb. i. 1, 2.*

THE Bible is beyond our human praise. Its fruits are its witness. It carries a light to enlighten, and a power to impress humanity which have left their marks deep and strong upon the world. Not only by those who have regarded its contents with unquestioning veneration, but by those, also, who have questioned every line and criticised its contents with the utmost freedom, has testimony been rendered to its wonderful excellence and power. How its familiar words ring in the ears of the successive generations, laden with comfort, hope, strength and joy! The generations have called it blessed; and a blessed book, indeed, it is. For it conveys a divine word uttered for human help and guidance in what pertains to the greatest and gravest interests which concern man.

From the words of our text I propose to offer some remarks on the Bible as the Record of a Progressive Divine Revelation. Two modes of treatment are open to me, a formal method and a way less formal. The subject is too large to be satisfactorily treated in formal order within the limits of a single discourse. If my chief purpose, however, were to urge conclusions I should be compelled to proceed formally, but as my purpose is rather to excite enquiry I may follow the leadings of my thought without reducing them to formal method.

The text is familiar and frequently cited: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." And the utterances of his prophets and his Son are on record for our use in this volume, which we call the Bible. No volume can have such claim on our regard as this one, and as we value it, we should seek to reach an intelligent appreciation of its contents. Who honors the Bible most? He who uses it blindly, without giving diligence in this direction, or he who presses every faculty into this service, and seeks to know truly what the will of the Lord is? When we find utterances in the Bible, which bear clear marks of human infirmity and imperfection do we honor it in any way, by blindly insisting that such utterances are divine? Do we not rather honor it when with reverent and discriminating thought we distinguish between the divine element in the Bible and its human accessories, and thus divesting the divine word of such perplexities, we have it in its simplicity to hide in our

hearts? And to this end, the tendencies of our best modern thought are steadily setting. There is a moving upon the face of the waters in this age, which is destined to lift theology out of the chaos and confusion of obsolete ecclesiastical formulas, and bring it more into harmony with God's gifts of reason and love bestowed on man. And this accomplished, humanity will rejoice with a joy unknown before. With a science of God, *i.e.* a theology, brought into open and declared harmony with the character of God and with God's gifts of reason and love bestowed on man, religion will shine with a new meaning in the world, and burn with a new force in the hearts of men. Christianity, which is a spiritual religion, will then come to be spiritually apprehended. Christianity, which is a universal religion, will then come to be universally accepted. The spirit of schism and sectarianism—developing itself in Calvinism, Arminianism, Congregationalism, Presbyterianism, Churchism, Wesleyanism, and the like—will then be broken. And then may we look for the advent of the new heavens and the new earth.

If we look for the topic which now most agitates the English-speaking Protestant world, we shall find that it relates to the Bible. What is the Bible and how is it to be regarded? What is the nature and measure of its inspiration and authority? These are questions which are now uppermost, discussed in popular tracts, in learned treatises, and brought into the highest courts of the English realm. No questions can be of graver import. During many years past they have

been forcing themselves on public attention. They have been long evaded or ignored by those who ought to have met them, but the time for ignoring them is past. How are they to be met? I answer they ought to be met honestly, and with an honest purpose of serving the cause of truth rather than the cause of tradition. Parties are widely separated in this discussion. And nowhere is the difference of view seen to be wider than among those who have signed the same church creeds and articles of faith. The matter stands thus: all concede to the Bible the highest regard and veneration—all affirm that to it, more than to any other book, the human race is indebted for moral advancement and spiritual elevation. All concede that it conveys to man a divine revelation of the first importance to him for his present guidance and eternal safety. But a marked difference exists as to the character of the record itself, and the manner in which the revelation is presented. Some maintain that it inheres in the letter of the record by virtue of a special inspiration infused therein, so that disregard of the letter becomes disregard of the spirit. According to this view all portions of the Bible become of equal value—the song of Solomon and the sermon on the mount, the enumerations of the Chronicles and the spiritual disclosures of the Gospel of John. Others maintain that the value and virtue of the revelation do not thus depend on the letter, but on something higher, deeper and more permanent than the letter, which is an outward formula, liable to change, and which does

change in different lands and different ages of the world. These affirm that the value and virtue of the revelation lie in its exhibition and announcement of moral and spiritual truth, which touches the deepest nature of man and compels assent and admiration there. According to the first view the Bible is spoken of as *the word of God*, as if every phrase of the book was articulated by God. According to the second view the Bible is spoken of as *containing* the word of God, as if it were the vehicle through which the highest expression of divine truth and love was presented to man. And according to this view some portions of the Bible will have more value for us than other portions.

This is a controversy which concerns Protestants only. And it is one which engages all classes of Protestants without distinction of sect or party. The most thoughtful and the best informed are those which are first agitated by such questions. And just in proportion to the number of thoughtful and well informed persons in any sect or party will be the attention given thereto. Where mere emotion in religion prevails unduly, or where mere tradition is accepted as food sufficient for the intellect, such questions will meet with no hospitable treatment, but be bullied into silence or scolded out of court as soon as they appear. The cry will be infidelity, scepticism and so forth. But it is the thought of thoughtful men, who spend themselves, and are spent in the cause of truth, which God ever smiles upon, and which in the end is destined to lead

and lift the world. Thousands and tens of thousands are well content to remain unpopular with man, and be persecuted even as Jesus was, who came to bear witness to a higher truth than the world then knew or would receive ; these, I say, are well content to remain unpopular with man all their lifetime, if so be they may help sow the seed of a higher truth, which is to bring forth fruit on the earth long after God has taken them to himself. In our own small body of religionists there have been men of this stamp, who by their studies and their writings have made us long familiar with questions and discussions which are now only beginning to agitate the larger bodies of Christians through the movements of the best, and best informed and noblest minds among them. Professor Norton, of Cambridge, New England, or any of our liberal teachers in old England, might treat learnedly and thoughtfully on the true grounds of the authority of Scripture in general, or investigate the origin of the Pentateuch in particular, but the sound of their voices died away within a very limited circle. But when years pass by and learned Oxford professors of the Church of England, and a Bishop of the same Church take up the discussion and treat it with earnestness and learning and manly vigor, behold the whole world is moved, and the most sluggish lift up their voice and ask what all this means ? The terrors of the law are held over the truth seekers, and the persuasions of brethren the most reverend are urged upon them, to stay the scandal ; but the simple answer is, that truth must be served and not

error, though it be in form of words ever so venerable. They take substantially the same ground that Luther took in his day. They demand reasons which will convince them. They say, in effect, we will not yield our convictions to such threats or remonstrances, but to something more worthy of men and Christians. We hold that we can justify our ground before God and men. Let us see whether you can invalidate it and justify yours.

No books in our day have raised such stir as the volume of "Essays and Reviews," written by several thoughtful and learned members of the Church of England on various subjects connected with theology and religion. The number of replies and responses, protests and petitions, clerical charges and warnings, to which they have given rise, has been quite overwhelming. From the character of the agitation raised within the limits of traditional orthodoxy, it is easy to see that the weak parts of this system have received a damaging blow, and that, as a general thing, its advocates have had their passions aroused, rather than their reason quickened into a clearer and more thoughtful exercise. And before the theological storm raised by the volume of "Essays and Reviews," had much abated, a Bishop of the English Church, by publishing a small book on the origin of the Pentateuch, aroused it to renewed vigor. That Jews should be very much disturbed by the arguments of Dr. Colenso on this subject, is quite natural. It breaks down the Rabbinical notion of the sacredness of the letter of Holy Writ and

changes the relation of Moses, their Lawgiver, to the first five books of the Bible. Bishop Colenso alleges the fact that these "books of the Pentateuch are never ascribed to Moses in the inscriptions of Hebrew MSS., or in printed copies of the Hebrew Bible. Nor are they styled 'Books of Moses' in the Septuagint or Vulgate, but only in our modern translations." (*Part II, ch. iii. s. 225.*) Now this is statement of simple fact, and his argument goes to show, on critical grounds, that the traditional popular opinion concerning the Mosaic origin and historical accuracy of these books cannot be correct. Well, suppose it clearly proved by the philological argument that Moses did not write these books, and suppose it proved by the arithmetical argument that certain statements relating to numbers contained therein cannot be correct, what then? Has Christ, therefore, not come into the world, or is the revelation of divine love in his Gospel invalidated thereby, and made of none effect to man? I can see no such connection between Moses' work in this matter, and Christ's work for our race, as would authorise such a conclusion, or any approach thereto. It is the gravest of mistakes so to yoke the Gospel with the letter of the law, or with the letter of any part of Scripture as to make it responsible for the literal defects of the record. In such a case Christianity is hurt in the house of its friends. The absence of any adequate reply to Bishop Colenso is very noticeable, especially so, in view of the great amount of adverse speaking and writing which he has

called forth. His fellow churchmen in Canada have been constrained to raise their voice in the matter, but this has been done in the way of protest and remonstrance, a short and easy way, it must be admitted, of dealing with such books. But then it savors too strongly of the pope's bull against the comet to have much effect with thinking people. Rational arguments, like comets, will hold on their way, bulls and protests to the contrary, notwithstanding.

That such writers as the authors of "Essays and Reviews," and Bishop Colenso of Natal, have the intellectual sympathy and moral support of a very large class of the more thoughtful and educated of their own countrymen in England, and in their own Church there, cannot be doubted. Their books have been and are in unprecedented demand both in England and on this side of the Atlantic, where they have been extensively reprinted. That there should be protests and remonstrances, largely signed and loudly uttered, will surprise nobody who knows how easy it is to obtain signatures and loud voices on behalf of currently received opinions. There is always a large crowd ready with loud voices and plenty of stones at hand, when any Stephen, or other witness, is to be stoned. But if Stephen is to be answered instead of being stoned, scolded or protested—answered, I mean, by argument requiring thought and reflection, then the number is lessened until the accused finds himself alone or nearly so. That such writers as Colenso, Jowett, and the like, have good support in their free and reverent enquiries

and utterances among the best minds of their own land and their own Church, I am forced to believe by many indications. They do not stand alone in their methods of investigation, or in their way of looking at the inspiration and authority of Holy Scripture. Far from it, indeed, notwithstanding all the petitions, remonstrances, and legal prosecutions. And as a set-off to such protests and remonstrances, from whatever source coming, let us call up the testimony of some of the best minds in the Anglican Church in England—men studious, and learned, and enjoying eminent ecclesiastical and university positions. Dr. A. P. Stanley, formerly an Oxford professor, and now Dean of Westminster, writes that the theory of a uniform and equal inspiration of every word and letter of the Bible, which is at present regarded almost as an article of faith by many religious persons, is comparatively modern, not having been systematised into theology until the latter part of the seventeenth century. He says, “It is not contained in any of the formularies of the Church of England. In the only instances in which the word ‘Inspiration’ and its cognate verb are used in the Liturgy and Articles, the sense is invariably that of divine influence, suggesting all good thoughts and wise counsels to the hearts and minds of all men.” (*Pref. to Three Sermons on Bible pp. v, vi.*)

“What conceivable connexion,” asks Dr. Arnold, in one of his sermons, “is there between the date of Cyrenius’ government, or the question whether our Lord healed a blind man as he was going into Jericho

or as he was leaving it; or whether Judas bought himself the field of blood, or it was bought by the high priests, what connection can there be between such questions and the truth of God's love to man in the redemption, and of the resurrection of our Lord? Do we give to any narrative in the world, to any statement, verbal or written, no other alternative than that it must be either infallible or unworthy of belief? Is not such an alternative so extravagant as to be a complete *reductio ad absurdum*? And yet such is the alternative which men seem generally to have admitted in considering the Scripture narratives: if a single error can be discovered, it is supposed to be fatal to the credibility of the whole.

"This has arisen," continues Dr. Arnold, "from an unwarranted interpretation of the word 'Inspiration,' and by a still more unwarranted inference. An inspired work is supposed to mean a work to which God has communicated his own perfections: so the slightest error or defect of any kind in it is inconceivable, and that which is other than perfect in all points cannot be inspired. This is the unwarranted interpretation of the word 'Inspiration.' But then follows the still more unwarranted inference, 'If all the Scripture is not inspired, Christianity cannot be true;' an inference which is absolutely entitled to no other consideration than what it may seem to derive from the number of those who have either openly or tacitly maintained it."

"The nature of inspiration," writes Professor Jowett

in his great essay, “ can only be known from the examination of Scripture. There is no other source to which we can turn for information ; and we have no right to assume some imaginary doctrine of inspiration like the infallibility of the Roman Catholic Church. To the question, ‘ What is inspiration ? ’ the first answer, therefore, is, ‘ That idea of Scripture which we gather from the knowledge of it.’ It is no mere *a priori* notion, but one to which the book is itself a witness. It is a fact which we infer from the study of Scripture, not of one portion only, but of the whole. Obviously, then, it embraces writings of very different kinds, the Book of Esther, for example, or the Song of Solomon as well as the Gospel of St. John. It is reconcilable with the mixed good and evil of the characters of the old Testament, which, nevertheless, does not exclude them from the favor of God, with the attribution to the divine Being of actions at variance with that higher revelation which he has given of himself in the Gospel. It is not inconsistent with imperfect or opposite aspects of the truth, as in the book of Job or Ecclesiastes ; with variations of fact in the Gospels or the books of Kings and Chronicles ; with inaccuracies of language in the Epistles of St. Paul. For these are all found in Scripture, neither is there any reason why they should not be, except a general impression that Scripture ought to have been written otherwise than it has.”

And the same writer says : “ If the term ‘ Inspiration ’ were to fall into disuse, no fact of nature or

history or language, no event in the life of man, or dealings of God with him, would be in any degree altered. The word itself is but of yesterday, not found in the earlier confessions of the reformed faith ; the difficulties that have arisen about it are only two or three centuries old." (*Essays and Reviews.*)

In the citations just made, I have presented the conclusions and utterances of some of the most thoughtful and reverent minds in England on the subject before us. My purpose in referring to these learned and eminent men who have reflected so carefully and spoken so freely on the character and contents of the Bible, will, I hope, be understood. It has been to remind you how strongly such questions are now moving the best minds of the age, and through them all classes of society who are disposed to serious thought, and have moral courage to look the popular traditional notions fairly in the face, to see what measure of actual and simple truth they represent. It is true, indeed, that some of these men have been brought into ecclesiastical courts to answer charges of heresy preferred against them by their more orthodox brethren. The decisions of such courts, however, on whichever side given, are of none effect in the last result as between actual truth and error. Their judgments are all relative to their legal standards of judgment, to wit : the written articles and formularies of the Church of England. So that when such decisions are given, the great previous question still remains, viz., how far are the articles and formularies themselves consistent with

truth actual and scriptural? The judges in such case will admit no pleadings in appeal to Holy Scripture. Dr. Lushington, in his judgment in the case of Dr. Williams, says: "I will not be tempted in the trial of any accusation against a clergyman, to resort to Scripture as the standard by which the doctrine is to be measured; and, I may, with perfect truth, add that, were such a task imposed upon me, the want of theological knowledge would incapacitate me from adequately discharging it." And, in conformity with this dictum, the learned judge orders that the articles of accusation "must be reformed by striking out all reference to extracts from the Bible found in the Prayer Book." (*Lushington's Judgment*, p. 13.)

Dr. Lushington declined to admit several of the articles of accusation in the form presented, but he admitted enough, eventually, to authorise him in pronouncing a judgment of limited suspension against Dr. Williams and Mr. Wilson, two of the Essayists and Reviewers. But, on appeal to the privy council, the judgment of suspension was set aside, and the accused clergymen set free of penalty. This is noticeable, as the latest declaration of the law by the highest tribunal in England—that it is not contrary to the doctrine of the Church of England, to hold and to teach that the Bible, in its contents, shows the traces of human imperfections in connection with its divine disclosures.

As to theories of inspiration, much has been said and written, but it seems to me that no precise and positive statement can be made of the theory of inspi-

ration of the Bible, certainly none which can be presented to the popular mind with satisfaction. No theory involving literal inspiration can be defended for a moment. The Bible was not given us to this end—not given us, I mean, that we might construct theories of inspiration. Inspiration is to be felt rather than defined. “The wind bloweth where it listeth,” as Christ himself said of this matter, but man is not called to make positive statements of the manner of its coming or going. A divine afflatus pervades the sacred volume—a breathing of the Holy Spirit—which is felt and found by the true seeker who seeks for it. And herein lie its virtue, its power and its proper use for us—in the Spirit rather than in the letter—in the reception and application of the Spirit, rather than in any theory concerning the letter. When we come to appreciate the spirit of the sacred writings, we shall find a ready key to the manner and mystery of their inspiration. And all discussion concerning theories of inspiration, in advance of this spiritual appreciation, will be vain and fruitless. “For the letter killeth,” and no discussions or decisions concerning the letter can ever make alive.

Take up the Bible as we have it, and what do we find within its covers? We find, in the first place, that it contains two grand divisions—Old Testament and New Testament; that these divisions, again, present subdivisions into various books, bearing different names taken from their authors, or from topics to which they relate. Within the covers of the Bible, there are

as many as sixty-six different treatises or books, written by a variety of persons on various subjects, under divers circumstances, and at different periods of time, some of them widely remote from the others. This venerable book, which we find thus divided, presents a varied mass of literature, history, didactic matter, poetry, narrative, and epistle. Its structure is evidently not that of a compact historical or scientific treatise, such as Hume's history or Locke's essay. Nor is it a collection of essays or documents, each of which is entirely independent of all the others like a volume of any of our periodical publications. No; the Bible in its structure is different from both of these. Although a period of more than four hundred years separates the Old Testament from the New, yet they are mutually related. For they both contain the utterances of men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Now this Spirit proceeds from God, being God in operation on the minds of men, and the utterance is still to the same effect and end, viz., to enlighten and help man, to guide him in his earthly pilgrimage, so that he may reach a heavenly country. At sundry times and divers manners has the great and merciful God spoken to this end, formerly through the prophets of the old dispensation, and latterly through his Son and apostles of the new dispensation. As the apostle Paul writes, "the law was our schoolmaster to bring men to Christ." (*Gal.* iii. 24.) Here we see denoted the purpose of the successive revelations given by prophets of former times and by the Messiah of the later times. By means of

these instrumentalities, God was carrying on a process of moral and spiritual education for the human race, lifting mankind from lower to higher levels of moral and spiritual apprehension. As touching divorcement Christ said to the people, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts" (*Mat. xix. 8*), suffered this thing, but it was not so from the beginning, nor shall ye have such license in this matter any longer. Here was a distinct recognition on the part of Jesus of the progressive character of the revelation, the record of which we have in the Bible. Man had lost communion with God, and ran riot in sin. Through sin his mind was darkened and his heart hardened. Out of the motions of his divine love and pity God spake through patriarchs, calling man back to himself from the base worships into which he had strayed. He spake through Moses, giving a law, a code of commandments, enjoining what men should do and what they should not do; thus acting on the conscience as a preparation for the higher law of love revealed in and by Christ. It becomes plain, then, that for an intelligent use of the Bible, we must keep these things in view. Under this incontrovertible aspect of the case, it becomes impossible for us to regard all parts of this volume, which we call the Bible, as of equal value. The traditional habit of doing so leads to endless mistakes in theology and religion, in social and personal morals. The Mormon justifies polygamy out of the Bible, and the slaveholder justifies slavery out of the Bible. I call to mind here Archbishop Whately's sensible illustration on this

point. He likens this habit to that of a man who should have received from his father, at various times, from childhood to mature manhood, a great number of letters containing directions as to conduct; and who should lay them by with reverence, but in a confused heap, taking any one of them at random, and reading it without reference to *date*, whenever he needed his father's instructions how to act.

God spake at sundry times and in divers manners by the prophets, but in these last days he hath spoken by his Son. I accept this last utterance of God as my chief and leading guidance. I interpret the whole Bible by the light of Jesus Christ. All previous dispensations I regard as fitted to their day and generation; but the Christian dispensation I regard as fitted for all times and all men. Law, prophets and psalms I accept gratefully and devoutly as precious gifts of God, but the words of the Lord Jesus, I accept gratefully and devoutly as the most precious and most perfect gift of all. The warrior psalmist of Israel may bless God for teaching his hands to war and his fingers to fight, and he may invoke curses on his enemies, but I do not regard such destructive and vindictive utterances, although on record in the Bible, as having any authority for me, as a guide in religion. How can I, when I hear Christ saying, "blessed are the peacemakers," and enjoining *love* towards enemies? The prophets and psalmists of the Old Testament do, indeed, give forth utterances divine -- utterances prompted by inspiration from God, and felt so to be,

by their penetrating and elevating power upon our souls. But the Lord Christ transcends them all, bringing us into the very presence of our heavenly Father, and quickening us with a new and lively hope towards him.

Thus regarding the Bible, not as a divinely-inspired whole, making God responsible for every word or phrase to be found between its covers, but as the *record* of a series of revelations made by God to man, and made through prophetic men, spiritually quickened, we occupy the only true and legitimate ground for defending the divine element in the Bible. Admitting the human element in the Bible, we cannot be forced into a false position, or have our faith in God and Christ shaken, by having this faith jeopardised through inseparable connection with proved imperfections in the record. And thus regarding the divine revelation recorded in the Bible, as *progressive* in its character, rising from lower to higher, until it culminates in Christ—the divine word made flesh—the last and grandest revelation of God expressed in a perfect human life in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, we find therein help and guidance, sure and unfailing. We escape the perplexities incident to an unintelligent regard to merely Jewish codes and notions. Christ shews us God, not only as a Sovereign, but as a Father, thus giving an idea of God, above all others most true in itself, and most affecting to the heart of man. He, the beloved Son, stands before the world as the living symbol of man in true union with God, which is the

consummation of all religious seeking. Christ calls on all his disciples to be spiritually one with him, as he is spiritually one with the Father. And he not only calls, but he shows the way. All this we have on record in the later revelation of the Bible. Thus does this great and blessed book guide us and help us, shedding heavenly light on our earthly journey, gilding this transient life of ours with the hope, the joy, and the glory of the life eternal.

SERMON VI.

THE CHRISTIAN SUNDAY.

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.”—*Rev. i. 10.*

THE Mosaic law was strict in its injunctions concerning the sabbath day. No work was to be done on pain of death—not even a fire kindled. (*Ex. xxxv. 3.*) A man found gathering sticks was taken before Moses and condemned to be stoned, and the congregation “stoned him with stones and he died.” (*Num. xv. 36.*) Such were the requirements—such the rigor of the Mosaic code concerning the sabbath or seventh day of the week—the day corresponding to our saturday. But these sabbaths of the Jews were only “a shadow of the things to come,” as the apostle writes, the substance of which was to be found in the gospel. The Jewish sabbath passed away with the rest of the Jewish ritual. It was not abolished formally nor immediately, for it is not the method of the gospel to abrogate abruptly but rather gradually, as its spirit

takes effect in human hearts. So long as any institution is likely to be serviceable to a man morally or spiritually, the gospel lays no rude hand upon it, but permits him to use it so long as he needs it. For it is a religion of spirit and life, and gladly lays hold of every instrumentality by which its supreme purpose may be served. In fact the first Christians—a portion of them—continued to observe the seventh day in connection with the first, which was universally adopted as a day of assembling for prayer and edification (*Acts* xx. 7), and a day enjoined by the apostle for offerings of charity. (*I Cor.* xvi. 2.) The first day of the week, or sunday, came to be thus observed because it was the day of the Lord's resurrection. Observed in commemoration of this joyful event, it was a day of joy and thankfulness to the believers. On this day they held their agapæ or love feasts, sometimes in remote upper rooms, and sometimes in the caverns of the earth to avoid the eye and sword of the persecutor. In process of time the Jewish sabbath went out of use entirely, and all the Christians were left with the first day of the week only as their day of rest from temporal concerns, and of activity in things spiritual. And thus has it come down to our age. We do not admit that the seventh day with its Jewish requirements has any special claim upon us. We do admit, and our present meeting is an evidence that we admit, a special claim for the first day with its Christian requirements.

But whereon do we base this claim? On what foundation do we ground our special observance of this

Christian rest day, which we call the Lord's day, as the primitive believers did? Not certainly on the law of Moses, for that code prescribes the seventh day, not the first. Nor is there any formal repeal of this injunction to be found in any part of the Bible. Neither is there any formal injunction in Holy Scripture prescribing the observance of the first day. We cannot, then, cite the formal and positive authority of Scripture for it. Yet its observance is not without a sufficient foundation and a binding force of obligation. This foundation we find in the nature of man—in the moral and spiritual needs of that nature. This binding force of obligation we find in the perpetual obligation which cleaves to man to seek what is highest, noblest, best, and holiest, and permits no means to pass unimproved by which this supreme end of his being may be served. These remarks, of course, do not apply directly to a specific day, first, second or seventh, but indirectly they do. Abstractly considered, if all days are alike, when we find that rest is a necessity of our nature we are legitimately bound to the selection of that day which providential circumstances indicate to us. As Christians we have indications that the first day is a fit day for our rest and worship. It is the day on which the Master rose from the dead, bringing life and immortality clearly to light. It commemorates the great historic event of the resurrection, and invites to all the thoughts feelings and hopes which cluster around it. So it appeared to the first believers, and they adopted it in consequence. As Christians of this nineteenth

century we have indications that the first day of the week is the day most fit for our rest and worship. For it is now a settled institution to this end throughout Christendom. It comes to us, an inheritance from our fathers, and with associations the most sublime and hallowing. It is now so interwoven as an institution with the providential order of the world's history that we cannot set it aside. Attempts have been made to do so, some on a large scale and some on a smaller, but they have failed, as all attempts must fail which embody the mere wilfulness of man, and array it against the august providential order of God.

I do not consider, then, that the Jewish sabbath has any special binding or authoritative claim upon you or me. You work in your workshops, you buy and sell in your warehouses on the seventh day as on any other ordinary day of the week. This being so, you will scarcely expect me to enlarge on the sabbath institution, in the Jewish sense. I would, if I could, make our Christian day of rest and worship more sacred and spiritually helpful than ever the Jewish sabbath was. This I would do, not by stoning men for gathering sticks, not by acting on fear or superstition to hold them back from overt acts, but by presenting to their minds, and commending to their consciences, the grand purposes which such a day may be made to serve. I would rather die than utter a word to depreciate the value of the Christian Sunday, or shake the respect of Christendom for the Lord's day. I would speak, so far as I can, to have that value correctly appreciated,

and that respect made stronger and more lasting by placing it on foundations which cannot fail. I would urge its value, and the respect which is due to it as an indispensable means towards the grandest of all ends—the end of the most commanding interest to moral and responsible, immortal and progressive beings. What is our life but a journey—a line of travel from one point of the spiritual scale to another—a line of travel wherein we may go forward or backward, upward or downward. If I am to speak of the sabbath institution, therefore, in the Christian sense, it is fit that I should speak of the use which is to be made of it in bringing us nearer to the great goal of all Christian endeavor—the use which is to be made of it in lifting our thoughts toward God, and leading our steps in the way of rectitude, self conquest, holiness and peace divine.

Here is a weekly recurring day of rest providentially given to us—a Christian sabbath :—How shall we best employ it to promote the great purpose of life? To promote the great purpose of life, I say again, for it is, in the first place, requisite to the intelligent apprehension of the matter that we regard the sunday or Christian sabbath as a means to an end, not an end in itself. Considered simply in itself the first day of the week carries no peculiar sanctity. It is only as considered in its connection with its sacred traditions and associations, and in the use to which we devote it in this connection, towards the supreme end of life, that its sanctity and value are to be found. Here we are

—all of us, young and old, some richer, some poorer, some more prominent in the world, some more obscure, but all travelling onward in our great human journey of life, and in our best hours looking to the same heavenly goal and hoping the same heavenly hopes. And the sabbaths stand, as the devout poet hath said,

“..... like way-marks, to cheer the pilgrim's path,
His progress mark, and keep his rest in view.”

They come to give

“.....new vigor to the languid pulse
Of life divine, restore the wandering feet,
Strengthen the weak, uphold the prone to slip,
Quicken the lingering, and the sinking list,
Establishing them all upon a rock.”

These lines, you will observe, are from the pen of a Christian poet. They indicate the use to which the Christian sabbath may be put in our life-journey.

But let us return to the direct question already proposed:—How shall we best employ the sunday to promote the great purpose of life? We shall use it for rest, says one. And so far he says well. But let us look at his deed, and mark in what sense we are to interpret his word. He is worn and wearied with six days' hard and constant work, and when the sunday comes he seeks rest for wearied bone and muscle. Certainly such rest is required, and to this end, doubtless, was the sabbath designed. But observe what he means by rest, and see if you can distinguish it from

indolence physical, mental and spiritual. He stays as long in bed as he can on the Sunday morning, and when he is tired of that, he rises to lounge on a couch until he is tired of this. To vary this monotony of indolence he takes up the last newspaper, perhaps, or some trashy book which emasculates the understanding, degrades the moral sense, and blinds and stultifies the soul. When he is tired of all this he strolls abroad somewhere, and, if no other attraction is in his way, he probably enters some church. This is one answer, practically developed. Another says we shall use it for rest and recreation. And so far he says well, too. But here, again, let us look at his deed, and see in what sense we are to interpret his word, for we are all apt, unconsciously, to deceive ourselves by words. He means by recreation the satisfaction of whatever desire is uppermost, without any just thought of its character; limitations or tendency. By recreation he means that which will enable him to pass the day most agreeably—that which will give him the greatest amount of enjoyment according to his own notions thereof. But it is evident that a way is opened here to a fatal mistake. For the man may be ignorant, lacking knowledge of duty, or he may be dull of conscience, not able to discriminate even within the limits of his knowledge, or he may be dead of soul, having all proper thought of God and of the life immortal obliterated, and living only for to-day and the enjoyments of the passing hour. In such a case his recreations can only be disastrous to him. His riding or driving, his boating,

drinking or dancing, his walking or talking with his companions can only be morally disastrous to him, confirming him in his spiritual death, and aggravating the worst circumstances of his condition. A third says, in effect, the sabbath is for rest, and I am willing that rest should be taken by those who desire it, but I do not. The force of a prevailing sentiment and custom in a Christian state of society closes workshop and warehouse, and thus shuts off my open opportunity from following my usual avocation in my usual way, but I will follow it, nevertheless,—I will post my books, and write my letters, and consider my bargains, and my chances of buying and selling. In this way I can steal a march on my neighbor who seems to think there is some other and worthier call upon him to-day than there was yesterday. Perhaps I may have time to do this, and get to church too, and thus be equal with him in the one direction, while I shall have clearly gained upon him in the other.

In indicating these answers I do not think I have exaggerated their character. Certainly, I know that nothing is to be gained by exaggeration in an enquiry such as this—so serious, so personal, and involving consequences so pregnant with weal and woe, far beyond the limits of earthly time. For this enquiry is one which bears directly on the structure of character whereby we are judged by our God, and whereon our destiny is made to depend. Against all such answers as I have indicated one fatal objection lies, which is patent to all persons of clear moral and

Christian discernment. To all such persons it is obvious, that, in such answers, no adequate account is taken of the nature of man, of his actual circumstances and most pressing needs. Man has a nature of a higher order than the physical, and therefore the rest of indolence, though it bring some relief to the physical nature, cannot help him toward the supreme end of life. Man has a higher nature than the sensual, a higher nature, too, than that which finds satisfaction in the sallies of a superficial wit and imagination, and therefore no amount of sensual pleasure or frivolous amusement can help him. Man has a nature which soars far above the base level of avarice, far above the vulgar level to which a desire for acquisition holds him, and therefore he will not be helped towards the highest purpose of life by a day devoted, in the main, to the service of these. Man has a soul, a spiritual part, which no mere sensual gratification, no frivolous pastime, no gains of avarice can ever satisfy. The soul has an inherent thirst for God, and nothing will adequately satisfy this want but the conscious contact of the spiritual part of man with the great fountain of goodness and Father of all spirits. You, or I, or any other man, may be in the position of the prodigal, away from the Father, through our transient wilfulness or the overruling force of base desire, and striving to find our satisfactions apart from him; but in this course we are at war with our nature, viewed in the light of its highest needs; and the experience of the prodigal is veri-

fied in our hearts, sooner or later. The void is felt. We find we have only husks before us. In our spiritual hunger and thirst we turn our eye toward the forsaken household of the Father. In our felt want we cry for God.

Such being the nature and such the spiritual necessities of man, we are furnished with an index which points directly, and at once, to the use which is to be made of our Christian sabbath. Looking at man's present circumstances in the world, we see that he is beset by two classes of interests, the material and the spiritual. And looking at the tendency of the times, we see how material interests press him at all points, challenging his attention and securing his regard. We see commercial competition at a fever heat, not sparing men day or night, racking their brains, shaking their nerves, and blanching their faces. Here is another index, the finger of a benignant providence, pointing to the use which is to be made of this day. Weekly it comes to man, calling him to rest from worldly toil, and inviting him to seek communion with heaven. To the Christian it carries no burden of Jewish restrictions with it, for the Christian's Lord hath assured him that man is not the servant of a sabbath ordinance, but the sabbath the servant and the helper of man. "The sabbath was made for man," said the Lord Jesus, "not man for the sabbath." (*Mark* ii. 27.) In the spirit of this declaration of the Master, should the sabbath be used. Do you ask whether

we should write letters, read books, walk abroad, or the like on this day? It is evident that to answer *yes* or answer *no* to this question would not throw much light on the subject; for the essence of the matter lies in the sort of letters you write, the sort of books you read, the sort of walks you take. Here we cannot lay down any precise verbal injunctions which will adequately meet the case. You know how entirely this is in harmony with the great purpose of Christianity, which is to infuse and fix in the heart of man such a living spirit of love to God and all forms of goodness as will lead it toward God, without pausing at every turn to learn the particulars of the way. "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day" (*Rev. i. 10*), says the apocalyptic writer of the New Testament. Herein may we find a direct suggestion of the secret of the whole matter. To seek a spiritual state of mind on the Lord's day, as a salutary and most necessary check on the materialism which presses so closely on us through all the other days of the week,—this is the use we should make of it, to this end did a gracious and benignant providence design it. Man has two classes of interests presented to him, the material and the spiritual. Both press him, demanding his service. And he may properly serve both; but only on one condition—that the material be held subordinate to the spiritual. Both cannot be served on equal terms; for as God has a higher claim than Mammon, to bring this claim down to an equality is really to degrade it. Now, it is clear that the Sunday should

be used in the direction and for the service of the higher interests of man. So that all manner of thought, occupation, amusement, or method of spending time, which distracts the attention from the higher to the lower interests, is clearly at variance with the spirit and purpose of the institution. Here is a simple test, which every man may apply to himself and for himself. Does his manner of spending the precious hours of Sunday make him nobler, holier, lift him upward; help him onward to a closer likeness to Christ and to God? Is it his settled and intelligent purpose to use them to this end?

“After a week’s chafing cares and bustle, what a privilege to pause and be refreshed with the thoughts of heaven.” So wrote Dr. Channing, in one of his familiar letters. “It is the sabbath”—these are his words again—“the remembrancer of our immortality, the soul’s holiday, when it should renew itself in happier regions.” Who does not feel that these words of Channing set forth the simple and just Christian view of the subject? Workshop and warehouse are closed on this day. The toiling beast is unyoked from the plough. The church is opened, symbolic of the highest hopes of man, and of the common worship of a common Father. Here let us use a portion of the day, mingling our best sympathies and loftiest aspirations with those of our fellow-men, strengthening the bond of our common brotherhood, and raising our joint-offering of prayer and praise—a spiritual sacrifice unto heaven. To works of blessed charity

let it be devoted, too, by which the neglected poor and ignorant and suffering and afflicted may be sought and found out and helped with the best help we can render. Let there be social intercourse and cheerfulness, reading at home, and a walk out under God's open sky—let there be all these in what measure we will, so that we do not allow mere selfishness to rule, and carry them into hours sacredly reserved, and by common consent set apart for the higher exercises and more direct services of religion. Our sundays spent in this way, they will be sabbaths indeed—seasons of refreshment to the soul, “times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord,” by which we shall be assisted to render God a grateful and more faithful service on every other day of the week. The sundays thus spent, thoughtfully, honorably, religiously, will build up the young in Christian manliness and womanliness, will give grace and strength to the more matured, and to old age will impart profound satisfaction and peace. Our “sabbath days' journeys,” made in this spirit, and with such purpose, will help us in the great journey of life, and lead us through the perplexities thereof to that sweet and joyful rest which remaineth for the people of God.

SERMON VII.

NEW YEAR.

Jan. 1863

“ Lord, let it alone this year also.”—*Luke* xiii. 8.

“ LORD, let it alone this year also.”—Thus pleads the vine-dresser with the master of the vineyard on behalf of the barren fig tree. The parable is the Lord’s, and known to you all. For three years the master had come to this tree seeking fruit, but had found none. It had been planted in the vineyard, and well cared for. The spade had been applied at its roots and the pruning knife at its branches. The refreshing showers had fallen from the skies, and the sunlight had streamed upon it from the heavens. It had shared the vigorous life of the earth in the spring time, and the genial warmth of the summer; but still the autumns came and went, and no fruit was forthcoming. Then said the master: Why doth it cumber the ground? why should it remain here extracting the nourishment from the earth which might otherwise go

to the vines around about, and come out in shining clusters of fruit, or taking up room which might be occupied by a productive tree? Cut it down—cut it down, said the master. Ah, Lord, pleads the vine dresser, “let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it; and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then, after that, thou shalt cut it down.”

Whatever may have been the special application of this parable to the Jewish nation, when it was uttered by our Saviour, the principles which it involves or announces are for all nations and for all time. There were some people there who had told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. There was a popular notion among the Jews that signal calamity betokened some special sinfulness on the part of the sufferers. And to this notion our Lord at once addresses himself, saying unto them: “Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things? I tell you nay; but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.” Then came the parable of the barren fig tree, to illustrate the necessity of timely repentance.

Quite frequently in the sacred Scriptures are men compared to trees. You will remember the simple and significant imagery of the first Psalm: “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly. whose delight is in the law of the Lord. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth fruit in his

season ; his leaf also shall not wither ; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." You will remember, too, the imagery employed by the Lord in his last discourse to his disciples : " I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." (*John xv. 5.*)

The point and significance of the parallel lie obviously in this, that both have the capacities for growth and improvement. Both are so constituted and organized as to bring forth fruit as the result of their organization. Both have outward helps toward the development of inward powers.

Note the process of growth in a tree.—Transverse section of the trunk shows concentric rings, which mark the annual growths. Note the process of growth in a man.—Layers of habit are annually deposited.

Fruit is the final expression and last result of the vigor and life of the tree,—that to which every prior process of budding and blossoming was preparatory and subordinate. Fruit (of works) is the final expression and last result of the inward life and vigor of the man—that to which every prior process of habit, training, culture and enlightenment was preparatory and subordinate.

"By their fruits ye shall know them," saith the Lord. And here we are reminded once more how the Savior, in his first notable discourse (on the mount) as in his last, adduces trees as fit symbols or images of men. "Ye shall know them by their fruits," he says, "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of this-

bles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. (*Mat.* vii. 16-17.)

Estimated with reference to the agent, the fruits of human life are of three kinds, viz: evil works, or works whereof the motive is evil; dead works, or works whereof the motive is not good, although the results to others may be good; and good works, or works whereof the motive is pure, good and godlike. Keeping this rule in mind, the thoughtful soul may be helped to a knowledge of itself, and of the character of its fruit-bearing.

In the parable from which our text is taken, justice makes its demand—its just demand. The master of the vineyard seeks for fruit where he had a full and just right to expect it. Then mercy intervenes in the words of the vine-dresser: “Lord, let it alone this year also.”

We would lift the parable with the principle it involves, and the lesson it conveys, out of its local and transient limitations, and apply it to ourselves and our own times. This is the first sunday of the new year. We begin this year with emphatic lessons of God's providence sounding in our ears. I need not refer again to the events which I noticed on last sunday evening, farther than to say that rarely have the uncertainty and the perishable nature of earthly riches been more clearly demonstrated than in the events of the year just closed. Fortunes have melted away or fallen away like snow from our housetops. Now all of us know

that the race for riches is the great race of this age and this continent. In Europe other prizes are sought as well as wealth. There, there are more prizes for ambition of various sorts, and amongst the more numerous leisured class to be found there, there is a more general race after mere pleasure. All the circumstances of this newer continent present wealth as the leading object to fire the hearts and move the hands of the mass of men here. The young man is drawn into the common vortex of desire, and though the Bible proverb warns him that innocence cannot well consist with haste to be rich—"He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent,"—(*Prov.* xxviii. 20,)—yet he girds himself for the race for riches as if these were the chief aim of living. Had the Lord said "by their fruits of gold and silver, of houses and lands, of stocks and securities, are my disciples to be known," men could not pursue these things with more prominence and steadfastness than they commonly do. But the events of the past year have very clearly shown us that the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong in this strife. For the strongest have been brought low, and the swiftest have been suddenly tripped up.

In view of such occurrences, then, may we not well pause, and ask ourselves whether, after all, this strife for wealth is worth the trouble? Whether it is really the best use we can make of life to seek this thing as the first thing? Or, whether, without neglecting this, or leaving it out of sight, there may not be a higher aim for us as the chief aim of life—some treasures

which are more lasting in their nature than the treasures of earthly riches ?

Or, without keeping in view any such special occurrences, but simply regarding the rolling years of time as they go and come in constant succession, and considering the use to which we put these years, and the demands which justly lie against us for the opportunities they afford to us, and the privileges they bring towards the growth and development of a true and fruit-bearing life, may we not well pause and question ourselves whether we have borne such fruit as ought in justice to satisfy the demands of the master of the vineyard ? Each of us stands as a tree in the great vineyard, and from each of us fruit is expected. As the old years go and the new years come—as year after year the fruit is sought—the fruit of endowment and of privilege—is the fruit found ? Ah, friends, let us remember our responsibilities, nor prove faithless to the great and sacred trust which has been committed to our charge. For surely life is a trust. Consider what man is ;—his faculties ;—his privileges. And consider, especially, the helps the Christian man has towards spiritual growth.

So far as the true end of life is concerned, how many of us are fulfilling it, even to the satisfaction of himself, in his more serious moods ? If the master should come and say, year after year have I sought the required fruit on this tree but have found none, what plea could we put in against being condemned as cumberers of the ground ? What is our fruit ? What

its measure? What its quality? Take the most favorable aspect of the case. We have been guilty of no great sins, let us say. No open or flagrant transgressions rise up before our vision to scare us by their awful forms. It is not, however, such sins as these, only, that give pain to the true and sensitive conscience. No. The good and struggling man, with loyal heart and tender conscience, will say still, what a good and struggling man with right loyal heart and tender conscience once so well wrote:—

“ It is not what my hands have done,
 That weighs my spirit down,
 That casts a shadow o'er the sun,
 And over earth a frown ;
 It is not any heinous guilt,
 Or vice by men abhorred ;
 For fair the fame that I have built,
 A fair life's just reward ;
 And men would wonder if they knew
 How sad I feel with sins so few.

“ They judge of actions which they see
 Brought out before the sun ;
 But conscience brings reproach to me
 For what I've left undone,—
 For opportunities of good
 In folly thrown away,
 For hours misspent in solitude,
 Forgetfulness to pray,—
 And thousand more omitted things
 Whose memory fills my breast with stings.”

H. Ware, Jun.

I have called this the most favorable aspect of the case, when conscience reproves us only for what we have left undone—when our sins have been those of passiveness or neglect. We scarcely require to be reminded that sins other than these lie at our doors—sins of active desire and insubordinate temper, the withering sins of the thankless heart and the repining spirit, the corroding sins of avarice and covetousness, the destroying sins of sensualism and the common worldly lusts which evermore press us—such sins as these beset us all more or less, and sap the proper vitality of our being. They rob us of the power of bearing fruit, and render us speechless in the presence of the master.

As year after year rolls past, and the new year comes, justice makes its demand that we bring forth fruit—simple justice, awful justice, justice bearing the majesty of divine sanction. The talents have been given, and it demands the return of adequate use and faithful service. Lacking the return, and in default of fruit, mercy intervenes, dear mercy, patient mercy, mercy the darling attribute of God—mercy intervenes, and the pleading is heard, “Lord, let it alone this year also.”

I see before me young men and maidens, and matured men and women;—tender children, too, I see before me, the hope of many a parent's heart. In every form I see, whether of young or old, I see that which contains a germ capable of celestial growth, a power capable of putting forth blossom and fruit unto ever-

lasting life. I might easily sketch out a plan of fruit-bearing life for each and for all. But it is not sketches or plans that any of us require. We all know enough to make plans for ourselves. Our first and pressing want is the devout and patient spirit, the persistent and unwearying purpose, which give vitality and productiveness to any plan of life. But this is to be obtained only by sincere seeking of the soul after God, and enthroning the things of his kingdom and righteousness in the first place in our affections and regards. We have all entered on another year. Shall we bring forth fruit therein? or, shall we bring forth none?

SERMON VIII.

—
SPRING.

“The earth bringeth forth her bud.”—*Is. lxi. 11.*

“THE earth bringeth forth her bud.”—Thus writes the prophet,—using this observed fact in nature, as a figure to illustrate the springing forth and spreading of righteousness and praise before all the nations.

Nature still works after her ancient methods, inviting us to observe her ways, and see in them, still, figures and illustrations and helps toward a deeper and clearer and more satisfying apprehension of the ways of God. “The earth bringeth forth her bud” still—the token of reviving life after the long pause of our lengthened winter. The winding sheet of snow is not yet quite removed from our land, but already do we feel the influence of the vital forces which are to lift it altogether away, and raise life into manifestation triumphantly and universally. “The trees of the Lord are full of sap,” writes the psalmist, “the cedars of

Lebanon which he hath planted." But the maples of Canada, too, are his—planted by him, as surely as the cedars of Lebanon. And the swelling buds of our maples this morning speak of the presence of the living God, working through the beneficent ministries of nature, so familiar to our eyes, yet so marvellous and mysterious.

On last sunday, having shown forth the Lord Christ's death, according to his own appointment and request, we likewise declared his resurrection. The early church of the west, which is the church of our fathers, recognised the analogy between the operations of nature and of grace, and desiring to perpetuate the recognition, placed the high anniversary festival of the resurrection of our Lord in the spring season of the year, when the earth puts forth its buds and other tokens of rising life. They substituted it for the ancient easter or spring festival of the Saxons. The resurrection in the material world comes to help us by its analogies towards an adequate apprehension of the resurrection in the spiritual world. The forms and manifestations of death and life are wonderfully commingled—we might rather say, mysteriously linked together everywhere. It has been said of the city of Rome that in walking through its present streets we walk upon the grave of a former city. If we raise the pavement and dig far enough, we reach pavements and monuments which speak afresh of the life of former generations. And farther southward in Italy I have seen a field waving with golden grain, while

away far beneath its roots, were the buried remains of a city, whose streets, gradually disintombed, showed the fresh traces of a social and political life just as it was lived eighteen centuries ago. But the whole earth, though teeming with present life, is yet a tomb—a huge monument of decay and death. The solid rocks have yielded before the unremitting action of the elements throughout the countless ages, and they lie in their dissolution beneath our feet at every step. What is the rich and fertile soil which cheers the heart and gives vigor to the arm of the cultivator? The dissolved and decayed remains of organic life. The whole earth is a sepulchre. In the bogs of Ireland may be seen the giants of forests of former epochs, prostrate and entombed,—fir-trees ancient as those of Hiram and Solomon, and oaks wherein sap has ceased to flow for untold centuries. Dig where you will, throughout our globe, you come into contact with the remains of former life. But these dead remains carry with them or within them not only the germs and forms of life,—which is marvellous;—but they carry also, in some profoundly secret way, the principle of life—so mysterious in itself. And so the earth is always ready for a resurrection unto life as soon as certain conditions outside of itself are fulfilled toward it. If one form of manifested life is undesirable we may destroy it, but we must be prepared to see it replaced by another. We may burn up or root up one particular crop in forest or in field, but the earth will not suspend its vital forces, nor by its utter barrenness confess the

exhaustion of its germs of life. It will assert its vital powers and resources by putting forth fresh organisms. Our planet revolves on its axis, and traverses its orbit—one of the millions which go to make up the unutterable wonder and glory of the universe. It revolves on its axis, and for a certain number of hours during each revolution has a portion of its surface away from the sun. Then, to some extent, may we see the decay of life in plant and animal. The feebler plant has no longer strength to keep its petals open. The ephemeral insect dies. But when this portion of its surface returns to the sun, the feeble and sensitive plant revives, and other ephemerals rise into life. Our planet traverses its orbit, and for a certain number of months during its annual round, a portion of its surface receives less of the sun's rays. Then vegetable life shrivels and dies. Then in our northern latitudes the earth is covered with a winding sheet of ice and snow. But when this portion of its surface turns more generously to the sun, this winding sheet is loosened and removed, and life breaks forth in strength and beauty and ample promise. The frozen sepulchre unsealed by the sun's genial rays, the earth asserts its powers and vindicates its vital resources by putting forth its bud—its bud, at once the token of present life and the promise of an ampler and far more fully developed life yet to come.

“The earth bringeth forth her bud.” And what a marvel the bud is which the earth brings forth! I do not envy the mind that can look upon the buds of spring with indifference. I do not envy the mind that

can look with indifference on these thronging tokens of renewal of life. I can have no feeling but that of compassion for the mind which could examine one of the full buds of spring without being moved to a feeling of love and wonder and adoration towards God as source of life, benignant providence, and gracious Father of all spirits. We dwell in the midst of mystery, but all the manifestations of the universe are gracious.—‘Manifold, indeed, are the works of God. In wisdom has he made them all. The earth is full of his riches. All creatures wait upon him. He openeth his hand and they are filled with good. He taketh away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. He sendeth forth his spirit, they are created, and he reneweth the face of the earth.’—Such song of praise, as the Hebrew psalmist sung, is fitting still for all hearts. And at no season more fitting than just now, when the sun which warms our planet is rising daily higher, and, by his increasing rays, breaking the fetters of winter, so that every form of life may reappear to gladden the heart of man by various use and beauty.

“The earth bringeth forth her bud.” I have said that the bud is a wonder in itself. And it is a beautiful token and sign of the wonder-working providence of God, which penetrates all the recesses of nature—moving all its forces, moulding all its forms, and producing all its results. What marvellous forecast is every where manifested in nature! Long before open results are seen, the preparation therefor is made. The little acorn carries concealed within its shell, at

once the prophecy of, and preparation for, the great oak which is to spread its hundred branches in the air. "The earth bringeth forth her bud." Our trees are as yet bare of foliage, for the snow of winter as yet lies on the ground. But the buds are on the branches—faithful bearers of the promise of the joyous leafage of more advanced spring and the luxuriant foliage of the summer. Mute enough and lifeless enough the buds appear as we give the tree a passing glance. But when we pause to examine them, they speak to us most impressively through the forms of life which they carry concealed within, and the clear revelation which they make of the working of a vital force in those hidden forms, toward an ampler development of life, when they shall be spread open to air and light and the sight of all eyes. If we would not be content with a mere passing glance, which gives us no knowledge nor sense of the wonder of life and living force which a bud contains, let us put forth our hand and draw it near to us. Going into garden, or field, or by the wayside, let us put forth our hand to examine the bud which the earth now brings forth. Looking at its outside or sheathing, we may not be much edified or impressed, yet may a careful scrutiny, even here, show us the signs of living forces at work within. But if we carefully dissect the bud or take it asunder, the marvels of its structure become very impressive and suggestive. Take a chestnut bud for illustration, as it is larger and more readily examined by the naked eye. Observe its sheathing or external covering;—

its interior covering of wool;—the minute leaf forms within, &c.

“The earth bringeth forth her bud.” The external and material world presents us with types and figures to illustrate the growth and development of life in the inward and spiritual world. Look what the bud is. We have just noticed its structure. The minute germ of the future foliage is hidden away in the bud beneath many coverings. The mysterious principle of life is lodged in that germ, working from within, outward, in its own marvellous way, gradually bursting the soft white wool in which it is swathed, and the multiplied folds of outward sheathing in which it was sealed as in a sealed sepulchre. In some such way is the hidden life lodged within us all, working still outward, developing itself through divinely originated forces and laws. As in the material world the law is, “to every seed its own body,” so in the spiritual world the growth and development of the individual life come from the root principles which we cherish in our heart, as the chief treasure thereof. Our life comes from our ruling affections and desires. As in the material world from the seed of thistles and the bud of thorns grows a body of thistle and thorn, so in the spiritual world from a cherished root principle of worldliness and sin grows a body of character bearing the fruit of worldliness and sin. As in the material world from the seed of figs and the bud of grape grows the body of the fig-tree and the grape, so in the spiritual world from a cherished root principle of holiness and righteousness grows a

body of character bearing the fruit of holiness and righteousness. While we are in the flesh and in this mundane sphere, what we really are may never adequately be made known—at least to each other. But, in the divinely ordained order of nature, the fall of this body of flesh will set free the body of character, which is the spiritual body, and then we shall see, face to face, clearly, openly, and without the concealment of outside coverings. Then shall the secret things of all hearts be revealed, and that which has been covered shall be openly made known. At present, there are so many outside coverings and disguises, some knowingly put on through craft and simulation, and some cleaving to us unconsciously, through sheer indolence or personal wilfulness, that we not only fail to know each other as we are, but we can scarcely know ourselves as we ought. We are in such hot haste after our gains, which we make our God, or after such poor puerilities as please the whim of the hour, that we refuse to pause and consider what manner of persons we are, or what is the character of the life which is growing up within us.

“The earth bringeth forth her bud,” and the trees now tell us that she will speedily burst the sepulchre in which their life is now hid, and spread out its various forms in full view. This is the joyous resurrection of nature—a resurrection full of promise. What is the promise of the other resurrection—the resurrection moral and spiritual? What is the character of the life that lies concealed in us all, as the germ lies in

the bud, for farther growth, and future open manifestation? Whence does it seek its nourishment and support? What are its ruling affections and desires? Does it seek to live by bread alone, or that which satisfies the sense merely? Or does it seize and appropriate the word of God as a support and joy to the spirit? Is it a life of sin bringing forth openly the baleful fruits of sin, or a life of hidden worldliness covered over by a cloak of decent outside morality? Or is it a life self-denying and devoted, after the manner of Christ—a “life hid with Christ in God.”

Here, my friends, are questions which deeply and directly concern us all. In all affection I would present them for your consideration, as in all sincerity I would put them to myself. Verily they are great and grave questions, challenging and demanding precedence before all others. Here let me recur to the lessons of the crucifixion in which we have been engaged so recently. Recal the self-denial, self-sacrifice, love, obedience and devotion of Christ. His spirit in us conquers evil in all its forms of selfishness, worldliness and open sin. His spirit within us brings a new and potent principle of life, destined to a celestial development in grace, glory, and joy eternal.

And here let me recur, likewise, to one of the lessons suggested at our communion table last Sunday. Periodic seasons of self-recollection are of signal service to us in reviewing the several stages of our individual experience, and reaching an adequate knowledge of our interior life in its actual character and prevailing tendencies.

And here, finally, let me recur to the high and inspiring thought of the resurrection which we considered also on last Sunday. The resurrection of the Lord fills us with a hope which, in the faithful soul, soon ripens into assurance that we, too, shall become the subjects of a resurrection—of a resurrection unto life, wherein and whereby we shall be raised to a life of clearer light, of grander proportions, of deeper peace, and of higher joy, than we have ever yet experienced. “The earth bringeth forth her bud,” and rises to new and joyous life in the spring time, carrying the promise of ampler and more fruitful life in time yet to come. The risen and ascended Christ has opened the way and made it clear, whereby all souls may rise from any and every present death of sin to the life of righteousness. He has shown us all that, through reception of his spirit, a life may be formed within—a life of love, loyalty, and devotion toward God, which time cannot limit, nor eternity exhaust—a life divine, which is destined to disengage itself from all mortal conditions, and grow with larger, brighter and more glorious growth in the open presence of God throughout an immortal existence.

SERMON IX.

A RETROSPECT.*

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FOUR.

For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth."—*Is.* xxi. 6.

To say that we dwell in a scene which is constantly changing, is only to repeat what we have all heard a thousand times. In fact, we exist only through a process of change, and every hour of our lives as it comes, carries with it a fresh phase of experience. If we travel across the field of a landscape, every step we take places us in a new position, and gives a point of observation differing from that which we had before. The change may be so gradual that we do not appreciate it as we proceed, and it is only when we reach some more conspicuous point where we can

*Preached on the last day of the year, 1854.

pause and make comparison, that we can properly understand what our progress has accomplished for us. Some persons can travel across the surface of a broad continent without pausing to make any such comparison, and all that they know or seem to care for, is, that they have completed their journey. Others, again, take eager and intelligent note of the ground over which they pass, and by their habits of observation, help themselves, and become helpful to others. In the one class the faculty of observation is dormant; in the other class, it is awake and active.

The journey of life may be made blindly or intelligently—with care or without care. We may go on with eye, mind, and heart closed—stolid or indifferent to its highest meaning, and to the striking lessons which it presents, or we may have all open, marking events as they pass, finding material for reflection, and food for the inner life. In the one case we pass purblind through the world, or at best, find ourselves shut up within a narrow circle of interests of which self is the centre. In the other case we look out upon men and things. We see a wider world than that which gravitates immediately round our personality. We recognise a providential order in the passing events. We mark the forging of the links which are to bind the future with the past in a grand chain of history. In the one case we cut ourselves off—so far as our selfishness and indolence can do so—from the prevailing life of humanity, and narrow the sphere of our human sympathy. In the other case we extend this

sphere, and by opening our eyes and minds to the larger life of the world, we enlarge our own nature, and augment its capacity, both for giving and receiving. We make the days speak, and the multitude of years teach us wisdom.

God is in the days as they come, and in the years as they roll; and all wisdom which does not see him there is but folly. Passing events are but historical chaos unless we can give them a place in the vast realm of order through heartfelt faith in a Divine Providence. This conviction of the soul binds them in the universal order, and bids the understanding be patient for the explanation and issue. Passing events are the fragments of history. Sometimes they explain themselves, or stand explained in the light of others with which they are connected. Sometimes, again, they are to human eyes dark and doubtful, and if regarded without reference to a supreme Ruling Power, their darkness becomes impenetrable, and their doubtfulness brings despair. A universe without a God,—no thought can be more mournful than this. A world without a guiding mind,—even the supposition thereof is sufficient to unsettle and distract us. Thanks be to God, he has written himself within us and without us, and given an assurance to the believing soul which no darkness can darken, nor doubt disturb. We see him in the changing days and the rolling years, and in the burden of events which they bring.

This is the last day of the year. Commencing on

sunday and closing on sunday, this departing year is a marked one in the calendar. But the added sabbath which has thus been given to us has not been the token of a year of rest. It has been a notable year, standing out from other years in more ways than one. If the watchman had taken his place in the watchtower fifty-two weeks since, when this now dying year first rose new and fresh upon the world in the light of the resurrection morning; and if, as the days and weeks and months and seasons swept past, he had been called upon to declare what he saw, how varied, and in very many cases how startling, would have been his report! Surrounded by the marvellous appliances of our modern civilization, every one may now be his own watchman. The daily newspaper spreads the world before him, and he may mark what comes to pass from the equator to the poles, and throughout every longitude.

And what has the year shown us? War—fierce, grim-visaged war—bloody, barbarous war. After forty years of peace, Europe has been most seriously disturbed, and three of its first rate Christian powers involved in war. Greek Christian, Protestant Christian, and Roman Christian, have mustered their hosts to the battle, and their ensigns have mingled, some in deadly strife, and some in friendly alliance with the banners of the Moslem. The immediate moving cause of this terrible calamity of nations has been made plain to every one who took any proper notice of passing events. The cloud at first appeared no bigger

than a man's hand, yet so obviously threatening that quick-sighted men had no difficulty in predicting the consequences. When the paltry dispute about the "holy places" commenced in Constantinople last year the British minister there saw that it was going to lead to grave results. He looked upon it in connection with past events and interpreted it by the light which they imparted. Russia in many respects is one of the most remarkable countries in the world. But lately born into the grand community of acknowledged empires, its growth has been that of a giant. Starting into barbarous existence in the cold and barren regions of the north, it has lengthened its cords and strengthened its stakes through its rude and unscrupulous native vigor—trampling down ancient kingdoms in its way, and subduing the tribes and peoples around it,—until it has become a just object of suspicion and cause of alarm, both to the European and Asiatic powers. Take down the map of Europe, and there you see more than a third, almost one half, of its territorial surface taken up by Russia. You see Russia stretching west to east, from the shores of the Baltic to the borders of Asia, and north and south, from the Arctic to the Euxine. Take down the map of Asia, and there you see how this vast empire covers the whole northern portion of the chart—crossing the Don and the Volga, and laying claim to the shores of the Caspian—passing over the Ural mountains, and sweeping clear away to the North Pacific Ocean. Take down the map of America, and you will see that

Behring's Strait has not arrested this formidable march. Russia is continued still, until stopped by a British frontier, where the long wall of the Rocky Mountains strikes the shore of the Arctic Ocean. Measured from west to east, then, on the map of the globe, this colossal empire extends from the Baltic waters in Europe, almost to the Rocky Mountains in America, while from north to south it reaches from the Arctic to the waters of the Black Sea and the Caspian, and to the mountains of the Chinese empire.

Here is a compact extent of territory, under the absolute control of one governing head, which is without any parallel in the world. Of course a large proportion of it is mere barren waste, but still the empire contains an immense population.* Prior to the last century Russia exercised but little influence on European affairs. But the genius and the wonderful energy of Peter the Great, who flourished in his strength about 150 years since, evolved a signal change in the condition of his realm, and with his reign came a new era. Every school boy is familiar with his going over to England, and working as a ship carpenter in one of the dockyards there, with the view of commencing a fleet, and thus open and prepare the way for his country to take its place as

* Intellectual life [in Russia]—even physical life—can be allowed to exist only so far as they assimilate themselves to support the control exercised by Czarism. * * * Every class feels the debasement—feels that by Nicholas all vitality, all individuality, except his own, are absorbed or annihilated. Nearly seventy millions of human beings are, after all, mere chattels, living only for him and through his imperial concession.—*Gurovski: Russia as it is*, p. 66.

one of the commanding nations. His genius saw what was required to make Russia a first-rate power—yes, more in Europe than any of the present first-rate powers. His territory was then hemmed in on the south by Poland and Turkey. He felt the disadvantage of his northern position, and he saw that contact with the waters of the Euxine and the Mediterranean was requisite to the consummation of his desire. He died, but his ideas of Russian greatness lived. Visions of ambition have always occupied his successors in the empire. And in these visions Constantinople was still prominent—Constantinople, key of Europe and Asia, the depôt of the commercial treasures of the east, the seat of ancient empire. It was seen as the future capital of a great and over-shadowing Russia. These ideas of aggrandisement have been the animating life of every succeeding emperor.

These are the ideas which have brought the calamities of war upon Europe during the year now closing—the end whereof is not yet. The dispute of last year concerning the “holy places” was but a pretext—the proper origin lay far behind that. It is a maxim that the constitutional monarch of England never dies ; but it may be regarded as no less a maxim that the aggrandising Czar of Russia never dies. His policy and ideas live on from age to age, and operate in every succeeding generation with accumulating force toward their ultimate object. Poland had been trampled on ; the Crimea had been secured ; and now the Ottoman empire is as a “sick and dying man.” In the distri-

bution of the estate, behold, Constantinople is ours. So thought the Czar Nicholas of our day. Not so, said the Sultan. Not so, said Britain and France. Hence the dispute. Hence the horrors of Sinope. Hence the clash of arms and the flowing blood on the Danube and the Alma. Hence the carnage at Balaklava and Inkerman, and the cannonading at Sebastopol.

See then, my hearers, see what an unholy ambition does. I know that this is an old story, and a trite moral, to those who have studied human history. The lawless ambition of the untamed and unsanctified human heart has wrought desolation in all ages, and left its tracks in human blood and human woe.

Although we dwell on this side of the Atlantic we see this war, and feel it too. Three thousand miles of intervening ocean do not cut us off from it. Our intercourse with Europe is so direct and constant, that in a matter of this sort we are as one community with the old world. It touches us physically, intellectually, morally, and spiritually. It affects the trade and commerce, the literature and the conversation of the civilized world. Many merchant ships are prevented from freely traversing the great highways of the sea. The publication of books of a higher order is curtailed by reason of the prevailing excitement of the public mind, while the press is prolific of hurried works more or less related to the great topic which now monopolizes attention. Our passions are agitated by what we read in the newspapers, and what we hear in the streets. Through some such means do the influences coming

from this war press upon us all, for better or for worse.

Restraint is demanded—self-restraint. Our feelings have been outraged by the ambition of the great disturber of Europe, by his profane use of the name of the Christian religion in his designs, and by repeated accounts of terrible destruction of human life in battle. Our hopes have been clouded, so far as they have been accustomed to look for a permanent pacific civilization, by his late provocation to war. With feelings thus outraged, and hopes thus disappointed, we are prone to go beyond the limits of a just indignation, in the desire for revenge, though that revenge should involve still more barbarity, and still more blood. I think I am not wrong in saying that such a desire springs up very readily and very naturally in many of us. But it must be remembered that its tendency is, so far as it has hold on us, to bring us down to that very barbarian level from which we made our first recoil. Here let us take care. Here let us look to the peaceful and benignant Christ. Here let us yield ourselves to his guidance, and submit our souls to the just and gracious restraints which his law imposes.

This war is a dark blot on the civilization of the nineteenth century. But we must not close our eyes to some of the brighter and more hopeful points connected with it. Hitherto it has been the custom for rulers to involve their nations in war to gratify personal animosities, or serve some other personal ends. But the tardiness and the evident reluctance of British statesmen to engage in this war, exhausting the

patience of the people by continued negotiations for peace, show that it was undertaken only as a terrible necessity. Moreover, in aiding Turkey against her gigantic and grasping foe, Britain and France strive on the side of humanity. They have distinctly pledged themselves by treaty not to augment their own territories thereby. That vast empire of Russia is the colossal type of absolutism. And these great nations throw their forces in the way of its southward march, as protectors of European freedom and civilization. A conflict of ideas is involved in this war. In the triumph of Russia, absolutism is triumphant, and popular liberty depressed. In the defeat of Russia, human freedom gains a victory, for despotism is shorn of so much prestige and power. I know not how victory may go at this present juncture. But for the ultimate triumph of freedom, justice and humanity, I have no fear. I have no fear, for I have faith in God.

When we look from Europe to this side of the Atlantic, we see the cause of liberty and humanity temporarily depressed in a land called free. While, in Europe, imperial ambition has been mustering its forces to push one form of despotism southward, we have seen, in America, republican cupidity mustering its forces to push another form of despotism northward. The struggle was violent and protracted on the Congress floor at Washington, but the legions of slavery at last carried the posts of freedom. The bulwark of the Missouri Compromise was broken down; and the Slave Power, stimulated and sustained by cotton and

cupidity, became open masters of the nation and the nation's councils. Territory before made sacred to liberty by solemn law of the United States, was then laid open for slavery. It was an audacious conquest, barbarous in its prominent purpose, and in its operation, enlarging the domain of barbarism. But that great and outwardly prosperous nation will find out sometime—mayhap ere long—that there is a higher power in the universe than cotton; higher interests than commercial interests; and a law, a “higher law,” which politicians may not defy with impunity. Multitudes of noble minds and generous hearts, in the United States, know and feel all this already. And now that this last blow has been successfully struck against justice and an advancing civilization, they think that the stroke has aroused the conscience of the nation, and that the cause of freedom will be a speedy gainer by the reaction.* Already have peaceful hosts emigrated from the north, resolved to reconquer a portion of the fair soil to the exclusive domain of liberty. Already has the ballot-box been made to speak more significantly on the side of humanity. Already has a current set in to renew and strengthen the nation's faith that “a *man* is of more value than the golden wedge of Ophir,” or the cotton crop of Carolina.

* As these sheets pass through the press in 1868, we can look back and see how the reaction, above referred to, led to the election of President Lincoln in 1860. Then came the revolt of the Slave States, involving four years' civil war, bringing defeat to the insurgents, and the abolition of slavery in America.

O, that that youthful giant nation were true to the grand ideas which gave it birth !

In the tumult of war and the movement of slavery which we have noticed, we have seen man as a prime agent and immediate moving power. His hands deliberately raised the warlike weapons in Europe. His voice voluntarily stormed the defences of freedom in America. The part he played in these was obvious and palpable. But in looking to the past of this closing year other events rise up before the eye of the observer, in which man had either no part as a moving power, or was involved so remotely with the origin, as to conceal from us the precise limits of his responsibility. The lengthened and parching drought of the summer, when the clouds refused rain, though field and garden yawned for it, and the woods blazed with fire, putting goodly villages in peril, was beyond human control. The pestilence which stalked in our own and other cities, carrying away neighbors and friends, sparing neither age, nor sex, nor class, was certainly not within the immediate control of man, and whether he was remotely responsible for it, or to what extent, none of us can positively affirm. The dread disease came, accomplished its fatal and desolating work, and departed—a mystery in its coming, a mystery in its working, a mystery in its going—defying the scrutiny of science, and baffling the skill of man. These were visitations in the natural order of providence, the causes of which lie too remote for our ken. They brought anxiety, suffering, and sorrow, and called

for the exercise of patience and faith. In a method of moral and spiritual discipline some such times and trials seem to be required to moderate the confidence of man in himself, and dispose him to humility and devout dependence on God. The gross and undiscerning mind may recoil from the lesson, but the more appreciating spirit will gratefully accept it, and follow its leadings to the realization of a closer communion with heaven.

Look from the land to the sea ; and behold what has taken place there. That vast field of waters covering two-thirds the surface of our planet has been a wonder and a mystery to man, from the beginning. Its depths who can reach ? Its hidden places who can explore ? Its huge form, instinct with motion, who can measure ? Its heaving and boisterous waves who can tame ? It rolls freely round the earth, washing the borders of every continent, everywhere approaching human abodes, and tempting the genius of man to adventure upon its yielding form, and to make its trackless path a highway of intercourse. From the early days when the men of Tyre put out with their tardy oars to steal cautiously along the Mediterranean coast, until our own times when stately palaces float from east to west, and from west to east, ploughing the waves of the Atlantic and the Pacific from shore to shore, the skill and enterprise of man have found scope and enjoyment upon the great uncertain deep. Alone with sea and sky, what a feeling that is, when abroad upon the ocean ! Riding the waves, so

terrible in their rising and their falling, how the heart of a man exults, and how the blood courses through his frame as he does it ! The distant shore, how welcome the sight thereof when he sees it, and how joyful the touch when he safely reaches it ! That wide sea, how it helps men to know their brothers, and bears upon its broad and flowing surface the products of every clime ! That wide, deep, heaving sea, how it serves man ! It brought Tyre to Carthage and opened the way for commerce and civilization. It floated the navies of Solomon which carried the gold of Ophir to Jerusalem. It lifted the modest ships of Columbus and halted them by the shores of the new western world. And fleets to-day, more than I can name or number, are borne upon its surface, binding man to man, and nation to nation, by ever enlarging ties of interest and affection. " O Lord, how manifold are thy works ! in wisdom hast thou made them all : the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships : there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein. These all wait upon thee ; that thou mayst give them their meat in due season."

That wide, deep, heaving sea, how it serves man, I say, but O, how it masters him likewise ! He rides the wave which swallows him up. His ships are ground to powder by its frozen masses, and he is driven to the most barren of lands to die the most awful of deaths. The fate of Sir. John Franklin

came to light during the year now closing, and it was a sad and touching story. Hardy martyr to science, peace be to thy dust in thy Arctic resting place! This dying year came into life with a wail of "sorrow on the sea." The troop steamship "San Francisco" was a helpless wreck upon the raging waters, with a living and dying freight of hundreds of men, when this year opened upon the world. That wail of "sorrow on the sea" has hardly ceased since. This year, 1854, will be memorable as a year of disasters by sea. During its first month, Lloyd's list reported an unusually large number of ships and lives lost; showing the largest known amount of casualties during the last 16 years, within the same period. I make this statement on the authority of a newspaper paragraph. I sought for Lloyd's list to verify it, and also to calculate, if possible, the entire losses of the year, for my own information, but I could not obtain a copy in Montreal. The extent of losses on vessels which have met with disasters during the last twelve months, has been reported in figures so enormous that I think we can hardly accept them until we know on what principle the computation has been made.

We do not, however, require precision in figures to inform us of the unusual calamities by sea during the year now closing. It has been the daily report of the newspapers. Noble ships have left their ports, and their departure is all that is known of their fate. This has been the case with the "City of Glasgow," and many others. Ships have been consumed by fire while

a float upon the water, which only quenched the flame when it swallowed them up. They have been dashed to pieces on treacherous coasts, or, like the magnificent "Arctic," they have "sunk like lead in the mighty waters." Verily the sea, though our servant, is yet our master. If we ride it too recklessly, it will startle us with proofs of its awful power. Man boasteth that he can rule nature, but if he mindeth not God, nature will rule him. In these particular disasters by sea I presume not to define the limits of man's responsibility. But that we wield our powers subject to imperative conditions, is evident. The merciful Being who rules supreme over land and sea alike, calls on us to observe them. Courage must be mixed with caution, boldness with humility, and the love of God must be lodged deeper in the soul than the love of gain. The loss of property by these disasters has been enormous, and the loss of life immense and appalling. The "wail of sorrow on the sea" has called a long echo of sorrow from the land. The sad experiences of this year forcibly appeal to us to reconsider the conditions of our safety and success upon the ocean.

The departing year, then, has shown us grim-visaged and bloody war convulsing Europe. It has shown us the barbarous institution of slavery breaking down the barrier which marked its bounds in America. It has shown us these things to modify any too sanguine expectations which we might cherish with respect to the progress of civilization in this nineteenth century.

Our too familiar boasting on this head required some such check. In patience we must possess our souls, while we wait and work for the coming of the divine kingdom.

The departing year has shown us drought and pestilence. By the discipline of these it has been calling on us to look to God and find our proper and permanent life in a vital union with him. It has shown us unusual disasters by sea; and, by the severe and repeated shocks it has thus administered, it has called on the busy men "that go down to the sea in ships, and do business in the great waters," to review the conditions of their safety and success there.

Historically considered, I think the departing year more notable and important than any other year since 1848. The great struggles of that year, when France was revolutionised, and Germany, and Italy, and Ireland internally convulsed, have been partially interpreted by the years which have followed. The great struggle of 1854 must be interpreted by the future also. I have my hopes and fears, but I pretend to no present interpretation. Eighteen hundred and fifty-four is now departing—almost departed—but as it leaves us it takes its place in the great providential order, a link in the grand chain of providential history. It will find its adjustment there independently of any effort of yours or mine. He that bindeth in one orderly and harmonious system Orion and the Pleiades, Sun and Moon, our Earth and the countless worlds which roll above and around us;—He will hold the passing

years in subjection to his infinite plan, and bind every one of them there in harmony with the ruling idea of his sublime order.

We have looked at the departing year ; and marked a few of the more prominent events which the outward world has presented to our notice. But there is another world—a world within us—a world of thought and feeling—a world wherein all that is without is reflected—a world where character is silently formed, and the life of the soul elaborated ; and the survey which the departing year suggests would be essentially defective if we failed to cast our eyes there. Does the year at its close find us nearer to God, or farther away from him, than we were at its commencement. Does it find us advancing or retrograding in the divine life—watching or neglecting the immortal interests of the soul ? The considerations here suggested we must defer until our second service. What time more fitting to think of them than when the shades of the last evening of the year have gathered around us ? Meantime, and always, may God dispose every one of us diligently to watch, patiently to wait, humbly to learn, and devoutly to adore.

SERMON X.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF NATIONALITY.

“I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.”—*Is.* xiii. 12.

THESE significant words lie embedded in an ancient prophecy concerning Babylon. In looking back through the dim vista of the old and far distant civilizations, that of Babylon looms up with profuse grandeur and magnificence. Babylonia, or Chaldea, was the most ancient kingdom in the world of which we have any historic knowledge. The Chinese claim an earlier national existence, and may have had it, but we do not find it in independent history. The Chaldean or Babylonian kingdom was probably founded by Nimrod, of the fourth generation from Noah. It had its place in Asia, with the Tigris for a boundary, and the Euphrates rolling through its centre. As these are two of the rivers which watered Eden we may infer that the site of this ancient kingdom was not far distant from the spot whence the race from Adam was origin-

ally distributed. As well as chronologists can ascertain, the foundation of Babylon, the chief city of the kingdom, was laid by Nimrod more than twenty-two centuries before Christ. We read in Genesis of Nimrod, the son of Cush, a mighty hunter before the Lord, and the beginning of whose kingdom was Babel. This mighty hunter laid the foundation of his city somewhat earlier than his kinsman Ashur laid the foundation of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, and more than fifty years before his uncle Mizraim built Memphis, the most ancient capital of ancient Egypt. The thought of Babylon, then, carries us far back into the remote past, and this to the contemplative spirit has not only high charms for the imagination, but copious material for reflection. In the vast sweep of time, and in the stupendous revolutions which it accomplishes in human affairs, the philosophic mind finds matter and scope for some of its grandest speculations, and the mind that rises higher than the merely philosophic plane—which possesses the spirit of religion as a living thing—beholds with wonder and reverential trust the working of God's great providential order.

Babylon was planned and constructed on a scale of immense magnitude, and, standing among the nations of remote antiquity, it seems to have had a splendor peculiarly its own. The culminating era of its grandeur seems to have been under Nebuchadnezzar, who flourished about six centuries before Christ, and by whom the captivity of the Hebrews was completed, and

the city of Jerusalem destroyed. If we may credit Herodotus, who saw Babylon within a century and a half subsequent to the time of Nebuchadnezzar, its dimensions were fifteen miles square, enclosed by a brick wall more than eighty feet thick, and three hundred and fifty feet high. The circuit of this great city wall, then, was sixty miles. We are not told that the entire enclosed space was built up, but we are told of its containing structures of surpassing magnitude and magnificence. The temple of Belus in Babylon was more extensive in its proportions than the temple of Jehovah in Jerusalem, and Jehovah's temple was plundered to add to the wealth of its appointments. The royal palace with its hanging gardens—immense terraces of blooming and luxuriant earth, rising one above the other to the height of the great wall itself, and resting upon structures of arched mason work—seems to belong to the region of imagination, rather than to that of actual and accomplished fact. Proud of such tokens of her power and prosperity Babylon sat among the nations as queen. The prophet speaks of her as “the golden city” (*Is.* xiv. 4.)—as “the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldee's excellency.” (*Is.* xiii. 19.) He speaks of her thus as “the glory of kingdoms, and the beauty of the Chaldee's excellency,” and yet, in the same breath, he declares that she “shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.”

Here is a portion of the burden of Isaiah concerning Babylon: “Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at

hand; it shall come as destruction from the Almighty I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will make a man more precious than fine gold, even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldee's excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and the owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces, and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged." (*Is. xiii.*) What a picture of desolation is drawn here! And I need not now remind you how it has been accomplished. Even the beasts, and the owls, have long since ceased to shelter in its houses and palaces. The sands of the desert have engulfed the ruins of all, and blotted it from the face of the earth.

In these tame later days of ours, and with our tamer habits of thought, we can scarcely understand the fire of the ancient prophet in his denunciation of human wickedness—we can scarcely appreciate his terrible

earnestness and energy in asserting the everlasting laws of God. "Howl ye," he cries, "for the day of the Lord is at hand. . . . I will punish the world for their evil. . . . I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger." Here is a strong—a vehement assertion of a divine everlasting Law. Nothing transcends a man in value. No gold, not even the finest, no wealth, no widespread national domains, no stupendous national monuments—none of these can rank as a man's equal in value. God holds a man in higher estimation than gold, or any magnificence which gold can buy, or the shining wealth of Ophir build up, and he will vindicate this law in his dealings with the nations. Yea, he will overthrow them one by one, as a man turneth over an ant-hill, until they come to learn, and respect, and live for this law. Babylon shall fall, and Assyria shall fall, and Egypt shall fall, and Greece shall fall, and Rome shall fall—yea, the heavens shall be shaken, and the earth thrown from her sphere, if the inhabitants thereof fail to recognize, and accept, and act upon this declared principle of God's providential government.

I have adverted to some of the details of the visible greatness of Babylon. And for what purpose? Was it merely to excite a moment's wonder by contemplating a palace so vast and grand, a wall so thick and lofty, a temple so capacious and magnificent? No.

Such a purpose were not worthy this place, and this hour. I did so to the end that ye might take note of the direction in which the Babylonian civilization put forth its greatest efforts. It sought wide national domains that it might reap a golden harvest of tribute. It sought to gather to itself the rich and shining wedges of Ophir. And with these treasures it constructed and adorned its palaces, its halls, and its temples, until they became marvels of magnitude and magnificence. Of a similar type was the Assyrian civilization, as history informs us, and the exhumed remains thereof show us at the present day. The Egyptian civilization, though possessed of some elements of a higher order, yet had many prominent and important points in common with it, as the huge remains of Thebes and Memphis still indicate. And now what is the tale which such huge remains whisper into the ear of the thoughtful spirit? As we meditate among the ruins of Karnac, or gaze upon the pyramids—as we enter with some persevering Layard into the buried halls of Nineveh or Babylon—what is the testimony which they give concerning man, and the value in which man was held in those very ancient times? Do not these huge remains speak, and bear witness, more potently than any living voice, and say: “Labor, labor, by the bodily labor of man, grinding, and long continued, were we raised in our greatness and glory. A man was considered as nothing in value, compared with us. He was crushed and degraded into a beast of burden that we might be lifted up.” Such, I say, is

the testimony which these huge remains offer concerning the character and tendencies of those ancient civilizations. We dare hardly offer an opinion as to the amount of human labor—mere bodily toil and drudgery—which was expended, say, on the wall of Babylon, or on the hanging gardens of the palace, undertaken, it is said, to gratify his queen's whim by one of the monarchs of the country. But we may form some proximate idea thereof, perhaps, from what we are told of other great structures of antiquity. We learn through Herodotus (*Lib. ii.—124.*) that a hundred thousand men were constantly engaged for twenty years in building one of the pyramids. This indicates the comparative value of a man in the scale of that civilization. He was estimated as so much available force to dig a quarry, or raise a stone. In the national ledger it might have been written down:—
Dr. To the working lifetime of a hundred thousand men. Cr. By a pyramid.

The divine law took effect on Babylonia and Egypt. They fell. They thought less of a man than of a palace or a pyramid, and they fell. They did not discern the everlasting truth, that nations are not to endure by the breadth of their territory, by the wealth of their cities, or by the magnitude or magnificence of their structures, but by the quality and character of their men. A new form of civilization came—that of Greece with its sages, its heroes, its statesmen, its artists unrivalled. But neither did Greece apprehend the true purpose of national existence, nor the

divine secret of national permanence. She wrote the Iliad, she conquered Egypt, she built the Parthenon. Yet she fell in her turn. She fell because she did not rightly value the mass of living men which she had in charge. Then came the Roman Empire, rising on the ruins of Greece to the mastery of the world. Here, too, was wisdom, and courage, and art, and enterprise, and magnitude, and magnificence. But all these passed away. Rome did not rightly value the living men within her wide boundaries—she did not rightly value and help them as men—and so the nation withered out of existence by the inevitable law of God.

Now as we glance at the fate of the past civilizations does not the thought at once revert to the present? There is the word of the prophet written in the Bible, telling us that God will make a man—even a man—more precious than the fine gold of Ophir. But in the past types of civilization we see the bulk of the men of the nations depressed and degraded. Instead of being regarded as the end of the national economy—instead of being regarded as the objects for whose welfare and elevation the nation ought to exist—they are treated merely as an item of the national force, and used as mere instruments for the attainment of some false and perishable national end. If war and conquest be made a national end they are sought and used to attain this. If the erection of huge and magnificent structures be made a national end they are sought and used to attain this. And their value is estimated just in proportion to the help they give

toward these national purposes. According to this view and method the man exists for the help and service of the thing, not the thing for the help and service of the man.

How is it in our Anglo-Saxon and American civilization? This is the main enquiry for us. The past lies behind us, the future is before us, but the present is ours. It is with the present, then, that we are chiefly concerned. The past is useful to us only so far as we can make it bear upon the present. This is an era of great triumphs. Steam belongs to our age, and the tall factory chimney, and the swift locomotive, and the low-lying, far-stretching iron rail. The marvellous telegraph wire belongs to our age, making a highway for the lightning as a messenger of human thought. These are at once the symbols and the signals of victories of a higher order than those of Greek or Roman conqueror. Through victories like these the most powerful forces in nature are put in docile training to the bidding of man. The achievements of the present age are wonderful—of a more wonderful order than those which produced the pyramids or the Parthenon. Golden lands of Ophir, too, lie beyond the seas to-day, richer and more productive than the Ophir of Isaiah's day. To what purpose have these achievements been made? For what purpose will they be used?

These are questions of great moment. And I know not, my friends, where they press more strongly for consideration than upon ourselves. For our position just now is a very responsible one. We are laying

the foundations of nationality under circumstances and conditions unprecedented in the history of the world. Two centuries since our country was the battle field of savage tribes—the warlike Iroquois preying on the more peaceful Huron and Algonquin. Gradually has the white man subdued it to himself, and now we witness the wide and ripe fruits of its conquest to civilization. With these results as a basis of future operations what will Canada be two centuries to come? I offer no reply to this question, but suggest it simply to call up thought of the future. We have a future before us pregnant with great results, and the demand of God upon us is that we do our work in the present not blindly, but intelligently. We cannot see the end from the beginning—only One Eye can reach so far—but we may discern and respect the true foundation on which to build. A great jubilee of material achievement has just been held in our city.* Crowds of strangers have thronged our streets, borne swiftly here from their distant homes by our new-laid railways. Our own mechanics, in significant procession, have added to the importance of the occasion. The water which had but lately fallen over the great Niagara, or the foaming Chaudière, was made to leap high again for joy in our squares. By the margin of our broad river a table was spread, and more than four thousand men held a feast, which was nothing less than a wedding feast. Commercial enterprise conceived the

* This discourse was preached on the Sunday after the great Railway Celebration, November, 1856.

idea of marriage union between the Atlantic and the Mississippi to be consummated on Canadian soil. It forged the wedding ring of solid iron, and proclaimed the banns. Rivers and hills forbade them, but the genius of commerce had no ear for the veto. It sunk the coffer-dam beside our city, and showed the St. Lawrence how it was to be conquered here, and where Niagara, hoarse with the roar of thousands of ages, had hollowed out its chasm, it swung across the rope of wire, and showed it how it was to be conquered there. And so the great ocean of the east and the great river of the west are linked together by bands of iron passing through our land.

We are laying the foundations of nationality, I say, and under rare and fortunate circumstances. All the wisdom and experience of the past are before us for help and guidance. The marvellous discoveries and inventions of the present age are fresh before our eyes, inviting us to apply and extend them. Our Mother Country, like a true parent dealing with a matured child, wisely and generously puts us on our own responsibilities. A province our country is, but without any provincial degradation. We stand not in the relation of servants to the old parent land beyond the sea, but in relation of sons, and we cleave all the more closely to her because we feel that our allegiance is not through constraint of fear, but of affection. Our land is a land of freedom, broad, generous, and unrestricted, so that every man, whatever be his creed, country, or color,—whether he be Protestant or

Catholic, African or European—may, within our borders, enjoy his natural rights of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” And look at the facilities of intercourse and means of enlightenment which are multiplying on our hands. England was nearly a thousand years a united and independent nation before she had a regular stage-coach between Liverpool and London. Tedious then were journeyings, and few persons went abroad, and one part of the country could know but little of the other. Canada has means to-day by which the length of England could be traversed within her borders between sunrise and sunset. Steam printing presses are at work for us, as well as steam locomotives, and no man need remain ignorant, but he who loves darkness rather than light.

Our great and increasing facilities of intercourse are eminent helps to the advancement of our country. Times have changed wonderfully within half a century, and we have changed with them. Forty years since it was the avowed policy of Britain to maintain a belt of primitive forest between this city and Lake Champlain, so that intercourse might be cut off between Canada and the United States. The Governor of that period had instructions from the Colonial Office to let any roads that might be in use fall into decay. Lord Bathurst writes to Sir J. Sherbrooke: “if any means should present themselves of letting those roads which have been already made fall into decay you will best comply with the views of His Majesty’s Government by their

adoption." That was a time of suspicion between kindred nations. We have now left such times not merely forty but four hundred years behind us. Our present Governor sanctions by his presence our great railroad jubilee, which was designed to inaugurate and mark the opening of more extensive roads and swifter methods of intercourse than ever entered into the dreams of his predecessor forty years ago. Sir Edmund Head, in his speech, says that our great bridges and railroads will connect us commercially and amicably with the people of the United States, and he cordially proposes the health of their President. From Montreal we can now pass to Lake Champlain in less than an hour, and by various railways are we linked to our neighbors on the other side of the frontier, so that we can pass to and fro, cultivating commerce and kindness of feeling. All this seems but the growth of yesterday, so rapid has it been. Ten years since, and fifteen miles of railway were all we had in Canada, but now we have fifteen hundred, equipped and working. Consider what this may do for us. Consider how it may be made to consolidate our people, develop the resources of our country, build up cities throughout the length and breadth of our wide domain, and cause the wilderness to blossom with the results of civilization. Take down the map of America and observe the work which awaits us. There is Canada stretching from east to west some twelve or fourteen hundred miles, with the gulf of St. Lawrence on the one side, and the mediterranean seas of Huron and

Superior on the other—our noble river making a highway from end to end. Look at the valley of the Ottawa, the shores of the great lakes, and the wide lumbering and agricultural districts penetrated by helpful streams and railways. Look at the tide of immigration flowing upon us every season in tens of thousands, and the nuclei of villages forming, which our posterity will see developed into large and prosperous cities. Look at these things, and behold the tokens of a great and progressive country passing from its infancy. And as we look, let us consider the part which we have to perform. Shall we in blindness surrender this broad and free domain with all its grand natural advantages to the sway of a mere material prosperity, and rest satisfied with the achievements thereof as the highest for which we ought to strive? Shall we regard mines, and forests, and teeming fields, stupendous bridges, railways, and steamships as of more value than the masses of living men within our limits? Shall we thus base our Canadian nationality on Babylonian foundations? Shall we thus prepare the way for future defeat and downfall? I pray to God against such mistake and sin. The word of the prophet sounds in our ears: ‘I will make a man of more value than gold, or anything which gold can buy or build up.’ Material development is useful to us only so far as it promotes the growth of upright, noble-minded, and holy men. The character of our people grounded on the law of God is the only hopeful foundation of our country’s welfare. Unless

the mental, moral, and religious growth of our people keeps full pace with our material prosperity we stand in jeopardy every hour. Unless we are a nation loving righteousness more than railways, and hating iniquity more than mercantile failure, we are raising a national structure which must fall and perish through its own lack of soundness.

To what purpose, then, I ask again, will our Anglo-Saxon and American civilization put the great material achievements which it has accomplished? I propose this question here because we are locked up in this form—its spirit and tendencies affect us at every turn, and must have a controlling influence in moulding our national character. And I contemplate it not without misgiving, yet not without hope. As I look upon our present order of civilization I see it overhung with clouds of peril, yet shining through these we may also see the bow of promise. Yes, both peril and promise are before us. It would be strange indeed if there were no peril, since it is the same human nature which is working in the civilization of to-day, which worked in the days of Ninus and Nebuchadnezzar, of Cyrus and Cæsar, of Pharaoh of Egypt, and Philip of Macedon. And strange would it be, too, if there were no promise, since the gospel of the Lord Christ has been hid like leaven and working in the world for eighteen centuries. Peril we have, surely. Promise we have, surely. And no graver lesson can be presented to the men of the present age than the consideration of these. As the devout mind contemplates humanity in its present

manifestation and action, in view of the everlasting law of God which makes a man of more value than the golden wedge of Ophir—as it beholds the nations of the present hour, and the condition of the masses of men and women that dwell within their borders—as it looks upon the leading aims of these nations, and the prevailing efforts put forth under their forms of civilization—I need not tell you how much there is to deplore. I need not tell you how much need there is of some sign of promise.

I speak still of our cognate Anglo-Saxon nations, and ask:—As Britain and America in all the wide extent of their domains, and collective strength of their people, and magnitude of their achievements, rise up before us, can we say of a verity that they have wisely taken warning from the fate of Babylon and the nations of antiquity? Can we say that they have come to estimate a man at his right value—at a higher value than the golden wedges of Australia or California, than territory in India or in Mexico, than railroads, and factories, and steamships, than coals, and cotton, and sugar? No. As we look upon these great nations, we see to what an extent the Babylonian notion still prevails, and how widely it is still acted upon. We see, and in sadness we see, that man is still depressed and degraded into a mere toiling tool—through which certain ends are to be reached, certain achievements accomplished. Does Britain desire a portion of India, or the American Union a part of Mexico? Men are then sought and valued in proportion to their

powers of extermination. A thousand, or ten thousand, or twenty thousand human lives, besides I know not how much degradation to those who survive, will be paid as an equivalent for the coveted territory. Does Britain wish to raise coal and metallic ore to serve great purposes of comfort and commerce? Men are sent into the bowels of the earth, and valued according to their powers of digging and dragging in the dark, damp mine. Do the Southern States of America wish to cultivate cotton and sugar, and gather wealth thereby? Men are made slaves by statute, and sent into the cane brake and cotton field, and valued according to their powers of endurance there, just as the horse or the ox is valued. In all such forms or manifestations of existing human activities we see a great wrong done to man, and therefore a great offence to God. In the system of slavery by statute we see the most deliberate and daring form of degrading men. But I dwell not now on special forms, since it suits my present purpose better to look at the prevailing spirit and tendency of our civilization as a whole. Is this spirit and tendency Babylonian or divine? Here we touch a matter of direct practical interest to us all. We touch a matter of supreme interest to the generations which are to follow us on the stage of human affairs. For it amounts to this:—Shall Britain and America fall as Babylon and Assyria have fallen, and through similar causes? This, surely, is a question of surpassing interest. Blest with the light of the Gospel, and standing in presence of God, the Supreme King of nations, it

surely becomes us to consider this question seriously and earnestly, and govern ourselves accordingly. Let me ask, then, does our present civilization, in its general bearing, contemplate a man chiefly as a means, or as an end? Is a man practically regarded to-day, even by the most advanced Anglo-Saxon nations, as of higher value than the material achievements which his persevering toil builds up? Is it not beyond denial or dispute that the fair answer to these questions would reveal the Babylonian, rather than the divine character of our aims and efforts? Go into any city or large active community on either side of the Atlantic—London, Liverpool, Glasgow, or Manchester,—New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, or our own city—go into any of these communities, and what is the palpable spirit of the place? You perceive at once, that it is accumulation. You see every nerve strained in this direction. You see men and things used to this end. If it be thought that the competition of these larger communities stimulates this spirit, and exaggerates this tendency, then I ask you to go into the most remote manufacturing or trading village, and still will you find the presence of the same spirit. It belongs to our nature. It clings to it, and in these days and among our race, subdues all things to itself more readily than any other power I know of. Nay more, in the pressure which we see constantly taking place toward the cities, from the more remote and secluded places of the land, we perceive the working of this same spirit seeking a field of more intense

activity. I need not tell you how this spirit in its practical working regards a man, or how it is disposed to value him. His worth is estimated according to the number of dollars, or pounds, which his labor can realise.

What is the result of this tendency? We see it everywhere—in cities and villages, but especially in cities, where activity is concentrated—we see it everywhere in the long and wearying hours of labor to which men are subjected. With clerk and craftsman, employer and employed, the whole tune of life is ‘labor, labor.’ The giant Accumulation, mounted on the back of humanity, rides it close to death. The weight thereof, crushes and smothers humane sentiment, religious feeling, all nobler thought, all holier aspiration. Labor is a great blessing, but it may be made a great blight. It is a great blessing when rightly used. No man ever yet felt the full enjoyment of life who did not work. But it becomes an awful blight to a man when it is abused and exaggerated. A man ceases to be a man when he becomes a mere labor-machine. Yet so it is with these orders of men, that the whole tune of life is ‘labor, labor.’ The English factory-child seeks legislative protection against the greed of the employer. And well would it be for the employer sometimes if he could secure any adequate protection against himself. I speak not here of the American slave. Legislation has deliberately and formally ignored his manhood. Let us not forget his wrongs. But we speak just now rather

of those who are legally free—their own property, not the property of another. The tendency of the present civilization is to oppress them with labor. City clerks and shopmen meet and memorialise, and appeal to public opinion that their hours of toil may be shortened. But with very little success. They feel that the tide of the times is strongly set against them, and that they can but feebly bear against it, or attempt to stem it. There is an extensive class of workers, who have bare time to refresh the worn body, and its wearied organs, by sleep. They work, and work still, and yet cannot procure an adequate supply of the first necessities of life. The reigning spirit of accumulation grinds them down to the lowest point. Whilst the various classes of employed persons are thus straitened and pressed, more or less, the condition of those who employ is very generally not much better. We see them driven from morning to night—their hands active, or their minds on the rack, in the heat of competition. They have as little leisure for the higher culture of their minds and hearts—of what belongs to a full and complete manhood—as the poorest drudge in their pay. And what is more and worse, frequently they do not seem to feel their want. Very commonly they appear dead to every higher and diviner desire.

All this comes from the tendency of our present civilization, and it is not very difficult to see where it would lead. It is not difficult to see that it leads to a partial development of manhood, not a full and just

development. The whole of a man's strength is drafted off in one direction, when it should be distributed in several directions. His duties to his God, to his family, and to his better self are sacrificed—subordinated to the one leading aim. The worship of God in the household is neglected. The worship of God in the church is neglected, or reduced to the lowest possible point. The domestic affections are impoverished, and the home in many a case is only known as a sort of nightly resting place. All generous mental culture, such as might come from reading and meditation, is denied. And the standing reason for all this neglect is lack of time. The whole tune of life being 'labor, labor,' the man does not feel that he has any time to spare for God's more special service; for the better service of his family, or for the service of his own better self.

Now it is evident that the material achievements of our present civilization—the steamships, the railroads, the telegraphs, the factories, the new-found mines of gold—it is evident that these, as they are increased, are calculated to increase the existing activity of men by the wider area which they give to their enterprise. In this way may they augment the tendency to put the bulk of men under bondage to excessive labor, and thus stunt their manly and divine growth. Herein lies the peril. And if it be not guarded against, and set aside, the fate of Babylon and Egypt will also be the fate of Britain and America. If the manhood of the man be neglected, if his just value in the divine

scale be depreciated, if he be regarded merely as a means to an end, if his worth be estimated simply in proportion to his use in accumulating wealth, or in building roads, bridges, factories, or palaces, then must our civilization share the fate of the civilizations of the past. God will vindicate his law, though the term of the trial given be reckoned by thousands of years, instead of by hundreds. God will vindicate his law, and the nations shall fall, if they fail to recognise that a man is of more value than territory or structure, than the nuggets of Australia, or the wedges of Ophir. Yea, they shall crumble into decay where the foundations are Babylonian, and not divine.

I have spoken of the peril of our present civilization, and would now speak of its promise. And here I say again, that it would be strange, indeed, if there were no promise in our present civilization, seeing that the leaven of Christianity has been hid and working in the world for eighteen centuries. Through the coming of Jesus a new element of divine power was infused into human society. Hereby, I am convinced, will the world be renovated. Another Babylon can never be raised, where Christianity is known. Nor can another Egypt. They belong exclusively to the past, and can never be reproduced in the future. They can never be reproduced in the future, I say, though the Babylonian principle may be so far reproduced as to bring decay and downfall to nations nominally Christian. I look with admiration on the working and unfolding of God's great order of pro-

vidence. I look with something more than admiration on the working and unfolding of his method of grace and salvation. When I look merely at the material achievements of the present day, I perceive that they have capacities for the help and development of humanity which those of the older civilizations did not possess. A recent writer on Egypt says that the social and civil condition of the agricultural population of that country at the present day is about the same as it was in the days of the Pharaohs. Humanity is stationary in its degradation within sight of the pyramids. But is it possible that it can remain so by the side of the railroad track, and the printing press? This question at once suggests the wide difference between the character of our achievements and those of the past. Some persons looking at this difference may be disposed to infer a promise for man's elevation apart from Christ, and independent of him. But the inference would be false, the result of a view extremely superficial. Christ cannot be separated from human history. Man has sometimes attempted strange divorces in the great order of providence, but he would be regarded as no less than a fool who should seek to ignore the influence of Jesus on the mind and heart of the modern world. His doctrine goes to quicken and expand mind and heart, and propel to new and wider activities. Subtle things, it is said, were known in ancient Egypt. Much curious knowledge lay in the heads of the priesthood. The surmise of some is that they even held the secret of steam. But their knowledge, great or little, mostly

died with them. It was not diffusive. It was for themselves, not for the race. In later times the secrets of knowledge could not be thus held. Like the generous Nile-waters they flowed outward, and all around, to refresh and fructify. This diffusive tendency of modern knowledge may be traced to the influence of Christianity. Such diffusiveness is one of the leading characteristics of Christianity itself. From the first it protested against its light being put under a bushel. It placed it on the hill. It spoke its word from the house-top. It imparted no goodness to be held and cherished for selfish purposes only. Its injunction was: "freely ye have received, freely give." Thus, through the gospel of the Lord Jesus, was the mind and heart of man quickened and stimulated as it never had been quickened and stimulated before. Hence came mental development and human progress. Hence the marvellous march of invention and discovery in later times, by which the modern world is lifted so far above and beyond the world of antiquity. Hence it is that the Egypt of to-day, standing on the ground of the Egypt of the past, was without steamship or railroad until it received the boon from our Christian civilization.

Yes, the material achievements of modern times are not mere material achievements. They have a high moral purpose. They stand not like palace or pyramid, apart from the great mass of humanity. They penetrate into the very centre of the mass to move and help it. The steam engine is destined in the unfolding of

divine providence to work out a higher purpose than millowner or stockholder dream of in their anxious survey of profits. It is destined to relieve man from the constant bondage to physical labor, and thus leave him free for a full development of his manhood. God's hand of wisdom is in the work. Christ's spirit of humanity is in the work. The grasping spirit of accumulation may seem to lay its hand on it for the time, and use it solely for its own purposes. But God is working meanwhile, and men are doing a grander work than they think of. Until this result come to pass—until mankind are relieved from the bondage of physical labor, and are granted leisure and opportunity for the culture and development of mind and heart, of what real service, let me ask, have our modern achievements been to man? This, I believe, is their true purpose in the grand economy of the divine providence. Men want freedom and leisure from constant pressing labor, that their souls may grow with a fitting growth. The genius of Christianity invites to this. And it is proof of the wisdom of the Roman Catholic Church that it has decreed holy-day after holy-day throughout the year as some relief from the pressure of labor. When the world gets wiser it will take more leisure and more recreation. When men come to a better appreciation of their own value, and to a truer understanding of their destiny, they will think more of the inward, and less of the outward—more of the mind, heart, and spirit, than of the wares of Manchester or wedges of Ophir. Then will it be seen that to build up a true

and holy manhood will be a nobler achievement than to build a palace, a pyramid, or a colossal fortune.

In Jesus we have the sign of promise for the world. His word was for the raising and the healing of the nations. The genius of his religion was quickening, expansive, diffusive. It impelled to new and wider activities, and it is destined to sanctify them all to the highest use of the human race. Then comes, too, the Lord himself in his personal and fraternal relation to the individual soul, infusing into every soul that sincerely seeks him a new and heavenly life—imparting thereto a baptism from on high. In Jesus, then, and his religion, we see elements of a new order which enter into our civilization, and which give it a promise of permanence which the older civilizations did not possess.

And it devolves on us as Christians—it devolves on the Christian Church as the working body of Christian believers—to give effect to Christianity in the world—to carry its principles faithfully into the present economy of the world's affairs. Jesus by his coming, his suffering, and dying to save the human soul from sin, gave the highest emphasis to the value of a man, and it devolves on us to affirm that value, to maintain it, and to insist that the economy of the nations shall be ordered in view thereof. It is not merely that the weak, the poor, and the enslaved, should have our sympathy, advocacy, and aid, for the Christian obligation here is palpable, but we should strive, and see to it, that our, *i.e.*, the Christian, nations should have for their prevailing economy and policy a basis not

Babylonian, but divine. We should strive and see to it that all national management and government should be for the help and elevation of the masses of the men and women within the limits of its control, rather than for the extension of territory, the accumulation of wealth, or the erection of huge national structures. So long as we admit that a man may be kept ignorant and depressed, as a tool for raising coal,—so long as we admit that a man may be degraded from his manhood, and legally enslaved, as a tool for raising cotton—so long as by active advocacy or by silent acquiescence we admit this, so long do we maintain in effect that a man is less precious than the gold of Ophir—yea, less precious than the mines of Newcastle or the cotton of Carolina.

Standing as we are here on the banks of the St. Lawrence—engaged, as we are, in building up a national structure, let us not so far forget the early days of civilization in this land as to struggle for material prosperity as the only thing worthy of our effort. Let us not forget that among the earliest messengers of civilization to Canada was the Christian missionary, who, for the sake of dark and uninstructed men, braved all the perils of the savages and the wilderness, and pitched his habitation here, enduring hardships betimes, such as we in these days can scarcely understand. He came through love of God and man to labor in this wild and distant place, and he laid a foundation of religion which no mere material achievements ought to be permitted to damage or obliterate.

In the dogmatic and ecclesiastical system which he brought along with him I have but little faith. It is not a system which aids advancement in widespread material prosperity. Had Canada remained under the sway of such a system, we should have had no such railway celebration as that which took place during the past week. This was the fruit of another and different order of things. But so far as the Catholic missionary came in the self-sacrificing spirit of Christ, and through love of God labored for the good of man—so far as he came in this spirit, through this motive, and for this purpose, he was a pioneer of religion, and it would be a sad commentary on our Protestant order of civilization if it should crush and smother an element like this by the dead weight of mere material achievement. In such a case we should be false to ourselves, and false to our ideas of Christianity. We should be false to the law of God, as laid down in the Bible, and clearly indicated in the text and elsewhere.

To us has been unfolded with singular emphasis the divine principle of building up nations in permanence and excellence. To endure they must feel and know that they have nothing more precious within their borders than their masses of living men, and that for their permanence they must depend on the life and character of these men—on the normal Christian development of their various faculties of mind, conscience, and heart. Truth, righteousness, and love—these are everlasting as God himself, and

to have these embodied in the living men and women who form a nation, cementing them together as a whole, guiding their thought, and directing their action—this is to fix therein a god-like principle of permanence. And not only of permanence, but of progress. For this is a principle of divine life, and so long as it is retained there can be not only no fall, but no decline. The nation will not only endure, but it will advance in prosperity and glory—prosperity and glory of the highest order. For a nation cherishing this principle—standing on a basis like this—there shall be no prophecy of desolation from the Lord, for the Lord himself will build it up, and it shall abide as a witness for himself, and a living monument to his glory upon the earth. “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord;” saith the psalmist. “Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.”

SERMON XI.

“RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION.”

THE RELATION OF MORALITY TO NATIONAL
WELL-BEING.

“Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people.”
Prov. xiv. 34.

HERE, my friends, is a terse and familiar sentence taken from the old Hebrew proverbs, and every syllable it contains is freighted with meaning. Christianity in its whole spirit and scope crowns it with its sanction, and affirms it with a commanding emphasis. The advent of the Gospel was at once a signal for the downfall of the ceremonial law of the Hebrews, which was transient in its institution; and a fresh testimony from on high to the value of the moral law, which is eternal as God himself. The Lord Christ in his coming gave to this law a deeper significance, and charged it with a spiritual power which penetrated all the ramifications

of man's thought and life. Forms and formalism, rites and ritualism, were all to bow down before the august majesty of its presence and confess themselves useless if they could not help its cause, and worse than useless if, by any attractions which they might offer, or confusion of thought which they might create, they should seduce men away in another direction, and tempt them to divide their allegiance. It was not merely the overt act of murder or lust which the blessed Lord condemned in his sermon on the mount, but the angry thought and the impure affection, out of which such overt acts sprung. No jot nor tittle of this supreme law of righteousness was to be annulled by Christ. In him and through him it was to gain its proper fulfilment. In him and through him the heart and conscience—the moral nature of man—was brought face to face with this law. In its presence man was to live. None of the common resorts of insincerity were to be recognized or tolerated. This was the clear teaching of our Divine Master on this point: "I say unto you, except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven."

The Lord's injunction upon us still is, to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Here he indicates what should be the first and leading aim of all our seeking and striving. A single eye to God, and a loving obedience to his law; this is the Christian idea of life. The religion of Jesus covers the whole of life in all its departments, not merely fragmentary

parts as special hours, days, or seasons. Not only in the church and private chamber should we look to God, as I said this morning, but also in the warehouse, workshop, and wherever we are. The Lord would have us to feel that the whole of life is religious, and that in all we do or think of doing, we should look to God and to the sanctions of his law. Already, to-day,* have I reminded you of this, for as year after year comes to us, and each new year's day at its coming finds us still entangled in the cares and toils of earthly life, it seemed to me fit that we should remember it, to the end that we might make each new year's day the starting point for a higher goal of Christian living. My first word of preaching to you on this first day of the year was, "seek first God and his righteousness." As Christian men and women, we ought to have a leading life-purpose, and this should be "God and his righteousness," subordinating there to all other aims and pursuits. Now it must be observed and remembered that the same sincere respect for God and his law, and the same supreme love and loyalty thereto which builds up the proper life of the individual are also required to build up the proper life of a nation. That which lifts us to heavenly citizenship ought to be the leading guidance in earthly citizenship. "By righteousness is a nation exalted," saith the Hebrew proverb. "The nation that will not serve God shall perish," writes God's prophet. These are emphatic

* January 1st, 1860.

declarations of holy writ. Let me now invite you, then, to some reflections on our duty in this regard, and consider our obligation, as members of the general body politic, to affirm and maintain the paramount necessity of righteousness to our national well-being. While the first evening shadows of the new year are gathering round us, let us, from a Christian point of view, consider our obligation as citizens to affirm and maintain the indefeasible claims of truth and justice in all that relates to the administration of our public affairs. Undoubtedly a nation is growing up here in Canada, which promises to hold no mean place in the future annals of civilization. But without pausing to speculate on the future, we may plainly see that Providence has bound up our lot with that of a young nation which is gradually coming to a consciousness of its importance through an increasing population, an increasing development of resources, and an increasing general activity of its people.

In the divine order of events, God has consigned to us of this generation the present direction of the destinies of this young and growing country. Herein we have a great charge—a high responsibility. In the ordering of Providence we stand in our lot here to build up a new nation in this northern latitude. Look at our situation on the map, and notice the influences which bear us company in carrying on the work of civilization on this North American Continent. From the Gulf of Mexico to Hudson's Bay, stretching over some twenty-five degrees of latitude, we find organized

institutions of government, on a basis more or less popular, and carried on mainly by men of the Anglo-Saxon and cognate races, speaking the English tongue. From the original settlements on the Atlantic coast, industrial enterprise has pressed far westward, and leaping over a thousand miles of wilderness, has already built some cities on the shore of the Pacific. We may divide this reach of country between the Mexican Gulf and Hudson's Bay into three parts, which we may call southern, central, and northern, and find in each of these parts special characteristics of governmental policy. In the southern portion, which comprises the Slave States of the American Union, we see a prominent vein of barbarism running through the structure of society, and recognised and upheld by law. Truths, with respect to the inalienable rights of men, which the more advanced civilization of this continent holds to be self-evident, are there denied. By the power of usage and law, and the national arms, one-third of the population are held in bondage—robbed of the right of their own bone, sinew and muscle. This element of barbarism blocks the way of progress, and so we find the common instrumentalities and evidences of national advancement—commercial enterprise, industrial development, and general education—all in a backward or stagnant state. In the central portion, which comprises the Free States of the American Union, we see another order of society, far more active, more prosperous, and more hopeful—an order of society which acknowledges the rights of

all men to life and liberty. And, building on this foundation of the inalienable rights of man, these Free States have had a national development which, for its rapidity, is without any parallel in history. But through their federal connection with the Slave States, the free basis of their government is tainted and invaded, so that they cannot say of every man within their limits, that his natural and inalienable rights will be recognised, and by them maintained. Within their limits one man may be claimed by another man as his chattel property, and they cannot say nay, nor put in any bar to the unrighteous claim. It cannot be said, then, that in their territory the sacred law of human freedom has sole and undivided rule. And notwithstanding their wonderful development in industry, commerce, and the practical arts, and their widely spread and well endowed institutions for diffusing general education, this slight toward one of the sacred and inalienable rights of man, must stand as a serious slur on the fair face of their advanced and flourishing civilization. In the northern portion, which comprises the combined Provinces of Canada, we see yet another order of society. Nominally dependent on that great trans-Atlantic nation, which is the parent and prototype of the existing civilization of America, we, the people of Canada, are really, and in the main, left to manage our own affairs. Our governmental institutions rest on a popular basis. Our industrial, commercial, and general activity is annually increasing, and though not yet equal to some of the States of the neighboring

Union, it bids fair to rival the best of them. Our soil, like that of our mother country, is strictly free, and our laws guarantee to every man within our limits, his natural right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Thus occupying the northernmost portion of civilized America, we have for our base, geographically speaking, the Free States of the American Republic, while above us on the map, and stretching away to the Arctic Ocean, there is an immense unoccupied territory, covered with the same flag which covers us, and waiting to be planted and civilized. On the eastward the Gulf of St. Lawrence gathers the briny waters of the Atlantic to lave our shores, while on the westward we have the great fresh water lakes. Coming from the far north-west, we have the grand stream of the Ottawa pressing its waters toward our own goodly city here, where they are received and swallowed up in the magnificent water course of the St. Lawrence, which from the farther south-west carries the contents of our mediterranean seas to the broad bosom of the Atlantic. Such is the country in which our lot has been cast by the gracious Providence which casts the lot of men, and sets them in their respective places on the earth to carry out the high purposes of God. All the movements which stir the minds of this continent, chronicled as they are by the daily press, and in a language common to us all, must affect us more or less. By no method can we, nor ought we, cut ourselves off from general American influences. Our nationality

as it grows, must savor of the soil on which it grows. Our civilization as it advances, must have a proper affinity for the continent on which it is built up. By every practicable method, however, ought we to stand clear of what would morally injure and debase us, from whatever quarter it may come. From the physical character of our country, may we see that ample scope is given us for development in agriculture, commerce, and manufacturing industry. Our natural resources are extensive; and the increasing facilities for making them available will naturally stimulate the energy and enterprise of our people.

A fair field is given us, then, for a promising career in material prosperity. Shall we rest our national character and risk our national permanence on this? Marked monuments of material progress are rising in various parts of our country. During the month just past, the greatest bridge ever built on this planet has been completed at our own doors. Spanning the St. Lawrence, it stretches from bank to bank over the broad stream on those solid piers which defy alike the weighty rush of the flood and the far weightier rush of the heaving ice field. Lying there in the morning or evening sun, it reminds the beholder, who has looked on both, of that wondrous aqueduct structure, which, surviving the storms and shocks of eighteen centuries, still stretches away over the wide field of the Roman campagna. That colossal fragment of the old Roman aqueduct remains, but what has become of the old Roman State and its civilization? After the lapse of

eighteen centuries, shall some curious traveller from afar, come to look on this bridge and find it serving its purpose in the midst of advanced Christian civilization, wherein righteousness is respected, or shall he find it a ruin, having done its work the while for a nation so greedy of gain, and so heedless of truth and right that the rot of ungodliness penetrated its bones and ate out its vitals.

Placed here by Providence to build up a nation, what sort of builders shall we be? Shall we ignore God and live only for self, or to serve some present purpose of seeming interest or convenience? If so, we write shame on our front, and plant the seeds of disease and decay in our body politic. At the foundation of any hopeful form of civil society, there must be well conceived ideas of justice and right, an honest recognition of God, and a sincere respect for his law. All reliable thinkers affirm this, for they can affirm nothing else. The greatest of the ancient Roman orators is quoted in popular books of our time, as asserting that "eternal justice is the basis of all human laws." And one of the most famous of modern British statesmen proclaims that "justice is the great standing policy of civil society." But all such utterances of orators and statesmen, whether of ancient or modern times, are but repetitions and re-affirmations of what was a proverb in Israel a thousand years before Cicero spoke, and full seven-and-twenty centuries before Edmund Burke was born. "By righteousness," saith the proverb, "is a nation exalted."

In every hopeful structure of civil society, well conceived ideas of truth and right must lie as fundamental. The only permanent foundation of a nation's welfare must be found in the upright and high resolved moral character of its people—in the fixed consciousness that both as individuals and as a body politic, they always stand in the very presence of God. It becomes a leading point in statesmanship, therefore, to infuse such a character into the nation—by every available means to elevate the general morality of the people, and to protect its interests by discountenancing and withstanding everything which may directly corrupt and degrade the body politic, or indirectly tend to lower the general respect for truth and justice. According to the theory and usage prevalent here, the ruling power of the governing body cannot be regarded as a power distinct from society, or independent of the general body of the people governed. From this general body the governing body derives its influence. The people of Canada designate and elect the men who manage our national affairs, and delegate to them the power and authority so to do. This being the case, we all become, in a measure, responsible for what they do or leave undone. Clearly, then, as Christian citizens we cannot—dare not—close our eyes to the deeds of our rulers. Their honor is our honor. Their shame our shame. Their loyal allegiance to truth, to justice, and to God will redound to our highest welfare as a nation. Their disregard of morality and disrespect toward

God will damage our national prospects and degrade us before heaven and earth.

The people of Canada elect their own law makers. We send delegates to the legislative halls, and their laws become our laws. They are there by our will. They enact by our authority. Herein we have the essence of free and popular government—a boon most precious—a blessing highly to be prized. Dishonest influence introduced here is treason to the whole system. Corruption in elections defrauds the citizen of his right and imposes upon him a galling wrong and insult. Instead of a representative, it basely obtrudes a voice which will misrepresent him. Every honorable mind shrinks from contact with such baseness and such treason to civil rights and social order. Now it has become too patent to be denied, that in Canada the honesty and purity of elections are invaded. Fraud, violence and corruption have been resorted to in some places to augment the polls, and men have sat and spoken and voted in parliament, who had neither moral nor legal right to be there. This is a fact which every good citizen must deplore, and against which every honest mind must protest. It is a fact which proclaims disregard of all law human and divine. It shows too clearly a disordered civil condition, and a debased state of public sentiment, which demands instant attention from every citizen who has at heart the proper welfare of this land. For verily if we go on from year to year, heedlessly to “plow iniquity and sow wickedness, we shall reap the same.”

With our institutions of popular and responsible government, the ruling body for the time being—the executive government—may be fairly taken to represent the average morality of the country. Perhaps some of you will say that those who occupy the places of power and influence ought to be men above the average morality—that they ought to shine as lights and be as leaders for the helping of the nation upward to higher plains of righteousness. The sanguine theorist looking at the rose-colored side of our nineteenth century civilization would probably say that they must be so. The simple, well-intentioned citizen, who does not look too closely at actual facts, would probably content himself with saying that he hoped they were so. The more thoughtful observer, however, will most likely confine himself to the statement just made: that with us the ruling body, chosen by the people, may be fairly taken to represent the average morality of the people.

Let the people of Canada, then, look at the character of their own morality as it may be seen reflected in the deeds of the men whom they have chosen to carry on the government of the country. We remember what our rulers did on their assumption of power some months more than a year ago.* I allude more particularly to what was actually done by a certain number of them, with the tacit sanction of their colleagues—all representing the sentiment and morality of the people

* In August, 1858.

of Canada. One assumed one office, and another took another, a third assumed still another office, and a fourth yet another. On a given day, in all due form, the Governor General administering the oath, each in his turn swore on the holy Evangelists—thus, in the most solemn and emphatic manner which law or custom provides, invoking Almighty God as a witness to his veracity—that he should duly and faithfully perform the functions of the office which he then undertook. But the next morning these functions were abandoned and those of other offices assumed. Now as to the morality of this procedure we must regard the intention of those who took the oath. If they affirm that they took it in good faith, honestly proposing to discharge the duties sworn to, then the Christian moralist has no word of criticism to offer. But if they put in no such plea, but openly allege that all this oath taking was a mere form without any proper intention of fulfilment—a mere form designed to satisfy the letter of a statute and serve a party purpose of the hour—if, by their own allegation, they do in fact acknowledge that all this solemn oath-taking for the due and faithful discharge of certain public functions, was only a necessary formal step towards disclaiming such functions—a requisite technical proceeding towards renouncing them—then the moralist is imperatively bound to take issue with them. He cannot stand mutely by while those who occupy the chief seats of authority and influence in the country do by their example debauch the consciences of the people by weak-

ening their reverence for the sanctity of an oath. He must remind them, and all who sanction their doings in this matter, whether on the highest seat of the country or in the obscurest corner thereof, that the Almighty God does not exist for any such purpose as this which they would put him to. He does not occupy his high place in the universe to the end that embarrassed party politicians may make a state-chamber convenience of him. He does not exist, I say, to serve any such purpose as this. Such persons may ring their official bell and summon any official lackey as a formal witness to their formal proceedings, but they are not at liberty thus to summon the Supreme God. He is not their lackey, but their Lord—the Lord of Lords, as he is King of Kings—the Sovereign above all Sovereigns, whose law is above all laws. We have read of an ancient nation who, to meet an exigency, suspended their laws for a day. But the moral laws of the universe admit of no such suspension. By no power of provincial governors, or crown ministers, or party politicians, can the everlasting law of truth and right be suspended for a moment. Its obligation is strictly perpetual. No casuistry can annul it. All the clouds which official casuistry may raise to conceal official delinquency speedily disappear before the open daylight breeze of honest common sense. In the estimate of the Christian moralist what does such insincere oath-taking amount to? John Milton, in his treatise on Christian doctrine, defines perjury in two forms, one of which “consists in making a lawful pro-

mise under the sanction of an oath, without intending to perform it, or at least without actually performing it." "Ye shall not swear by my name falsely," saith Jehovah, "neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God." No nation can hopefully prosper, or find the blessing of God, or rejoice in the glory of God, through such swearing as this. The divine promise to the nations points in the direction quite opposite. The sanctity of truth must receive no slight either in simple word or under form of oath. Truth, on her radiant throne, must always be kept in view as a beacon light, and held in high reverence, for she is of the very essence of God. Thus writes the prophet, "Thou shalt swear the Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory."

I have said that the people of Canada are responsible for their rulers, and that, in view of our popular institutions, those rulers may at all times be fairly taken to represent the average morality of the country. When abroad, during the past year, on the other side of the Atlantic, I heard this plea urged, and I could not reasonably deny its validity. Intelligent persons abroad only notice our leading political inconsistencies and glaring sins, which stand as our national reproach. They cannot see nor understand the intricate network of party purposes through which these things have been brought to pass. They look directly at the results and judge accordingly. Morally considered, the insincere oath-taking cannot be regarded other-

wise than as a very grave affront to the majesty and sanctity of truth. And though apparently sanctioned by the majority of this country, through the party votes of their representatives in parliament, I cannot but think, that if the people at large had an opportunity of expressing themselves directly concerning this standing national scandal, by far the greater number would repudiate it, and protest against it before the world.

In a young and growing state of society like ours, we are exposed to many and peculiar trials. Even in well-matured nations the combination of qualities requisite to proper statesmanship is only to be found in a highly gifted few. In the absence of statesmen in the proper sense of the term—in the absence of men who, by genius, study, and patient attainment, are qualified to direct the affairs and shape the destinies of the country, we are too often left at the mercy of mere party politicians—men actuated by petty ambition and narrow personal ends. The statesman keeps his eye on the welfare, the honor, and the permanent prosperity of the nation, and he spends his energy and shapes his policy in this direction. The party politician keeps his eye on retention of office and emolument, and whatever wit he has, is kept at work in plotting and scheming for this purpose. Instead of large, wise, statesman-like measures of national import, he is constantly presenting party devices to meet party emergencies. In the ancient pagan civilization the internal strifes were those of faction against faction for

the larger share of power. This is the natural tendency of unenlightened man. The party politician of to-day rises no higher. In our Christian civilization certain general principles are recognised as absolutely essential to social order and the proper honor and prosperity of nations. The honorable statesman works in view of these principles, and in all the conflicts to which he is called he consents to stand on the ground of principle only, disdaining all baser struggles for office, place, or personal emolument.

Neither you nor I, my friends, can create statesmen. They are the gift of God. But the humblest of us can do something toward raising the standard of general morality, and vindicating that law of righteousness by which nations are exalted. I ask you not to which side of party politics you are attached. With that matter I have no proper concern. It may be of little consequence to you or to me what particular person shall occupy the seats of governor and crown ministers for the time being, but it is of great consequence to us, that whosoever they are they shall hold God in reverence, and in their public transactions give just respect to his laws of morality. And seeing how various and weighty are the general social interests depending on personal veracity, and especially on the regard given to the sanctity of an oath, it is of high importance that our rulers should recognise this, and by their influence strengthen the authority of such a solemn averment in and over the common mind, and not weaken it. As for political parties, while we may

recognize their uses we must confess that on all sides, and under whatever leaders, they too frequently become snares to personal independence, and shoals whereon private honor is shipwrecked. As for party affinities, again, each one must judge and act for himself. But in all issues as between honesty and dishonesty, sincerity and insincerity, justice and injustice—in all such moral issues which rise clear above party lines, we are bound to warn each other, and ought constantly to stand warned against any compromise with unrighteousness, though the compromise seem ever so small, or ever so convenient for the present. Every such compromise is a sin which a righteous God cannot but hate—a sin which must degrade and be a reproach to the nation.

“Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people.” We may hold conventions, as some of our compatriots have done, or write out constitutions, as some of them still talk of doing, but constitutions, written or unwritten, will be of little avail unless, by elevating the general morality, we can have honest and honorable public men to deal with them. We cannot make a nation out of written parchments be they ever so skilfully drawn, any more than out of railways, bridges, or other monuments of material achievement. Only men can make a nation—high-minded Christian men, who love righteousness and are loyal to it, who hate iniquity and abjure it. The great and loving God by whom kings reign, and princes decree, and rulers rule, and peoples rise and fall, is the

perfection of justice and truth. And as we gather here in the sanctuary to adore him, our prayer and effort still should be to grow into his likeness through the growing love of his blessed perfections. The life of God flowing through upright and faithful souls will be the life, the strength, and the glory of the nation. And Christian fathers and mothers, by their daily ministrations in the familiar temple of the household, may, through the devout training of their little ones in that fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom, and in that love of God and his righteousness, which is the everlasting joy and hope of the soul—they may contribute directly to the honor, the proper welfare, and the hopeful prosperity of the country. As Christian citizens we have the matter in our own hands. If we are heedless of God, and disloyal to his law of righteousness in our national concerns, we abdicate our functions, and basely misuse as grand an opportunity as ever was given to man for building up a free and prosperous Christian nation. If we are faithful to God and hold in steady reverence his law of truth and right, his smile will be upon us, his blessing will bless us, his hand will help us, and we shall be co-workers with all upright, noble and holy souls in all lands, toward hastening the day when all the nations of this earth shall become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ.

Now unto Him who is able to keep us from falling, the only wise God; be honor and glory, through Jesus Christ, for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XII.

THE PLANTING AND PURPOSE OF AMERICA.

“The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.”—*Prov. xvi. 33.*

THIS Hebrew proverb is the offspring of religious faith. In the eyes of the true Hebrew, whatsoever came to pass was of the Lord's disposal. And this view, I affirm, sets forth the true philosophy of history. The human generations come and go—each in its day does its own work, within its own sphere, and after its own manner; but all these, in their coming and going, and in all that they enact on the stage of time, are subject to eternal law, which brings them inevitably into the line of God's providential order. Whatever may be the apparent tendencies, or accomplished facts of any given period of history, though the intellect may be perplexed, yet doth the believing soul stand firm and patient. For it bears in mind the greatness of the scale on which He works to whom “a thousand years

are as one day." And while it bears its own testimony against every form of evil, yet will it not be cast down, though evil seem to triumph for the while, since it remembers, too, that in the onward working of the divine order even the wrath of man shall minister to the praise of God. Firm and fixed in its faith in God as Sovereign Ruler, the believing soul wavers not in its conviction that his eternal laws will in due time vindicate themselves in human history.

Looking at history thus—in the light of religious faith—I propose to offer some remarks on the *Providential Planting and Purpose of America*. This topic is suggested by the hour now upon us. It is the eve of the day which specially commemorates the landing of the Puritan Pilgrims on the frozen shore of New England. This landing forms a notable era in the history of this continent. Other settlers from other lands had planted themselves and their institutions in America before these stern Englishmen came; but in the gradual unfolding of the divine order of events, it became evident that while the one must increase, the other must decrease. The great tree of American civilization was to grow from an English root, of which these Puritan Pilgrims were the most vital fibres. The life that was in them ramified itself in every direction—an informing spirit moulding law and usage, more or less, according to its own form. Deeper than any other men have they stamped their mark on the civilization of this North American Continent.

“The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole dispos-

ing thereof is of the Lord." An unrighteous persecution drove the Puritan Pilgrims from their native land. They stood firm, and suffered sore, as witnesses for the natural rights of man. They accepted their lot in the spirit of profound religious faith, and used their best judgment toward the fulfilment of their earthly course. Their human proposal for themselves and their children, was made in conformity with their best light, but the divine disposal with respect to these men was something quite different. On leaving European civilization for an American wilderness they sailed for a port which Providence never permitted them to reach. The future held a destiny for them higher than they wist. Men never appear more grand than when they willingly do and dare and suffer for conscience sake. For then and therein we see the assertion of genuine manhood—the vindication of that nobler part of us which looks to God and his claims, and renders to these the first allegiance of the life. "Why stay you here," said the low-minded wife of Sir Thomas More to her husband while imprisoned in the tower—"why stay you here in such discomfort, when your fine house at Chelsea and all its comforts await you, if you would only do what the nobles and the best men of the realm have done?" "The fine house at Chelsea and all its comforts would be worse than a prison to me with conscience offended," was the noble reply. The king might take his head and place it on London Bridge, but he should not invade his conscience. Of a far different faith from More were the Puritans of the succeeding century ;

but for conscience sake they withstood the Stuart as More had withstood the Tudor. They would not conform to the king's religion. They cheerfully accepted the penalty of non-conformity, and, hunted by arbitrary power, they left their homes and homesteads and native land to seek refuge elsewhere. They tried Holland, but were dissatisfied there, for they feared the loss to their children of their dear native language. And after much weary thought and patient toil they entered their little ship, and pushing away from the shores of the old world they steered for the American wilderness.

Man proposes, but it is God who disposes. The proposed destination of the Puritan Pilgrims was Virginia. They carried no charter from the crown, for the king would not grant them a charter. But they obtained a grant of land from the company in London, and steered for Virginia. A few years previously the tobacco plant had been brought into that colony, and about the time they were starting, the first importation of negro slaves was landed there. In all probability, then, the result of their human proposal to colonise Virginia would have been to make them and their posterity planters of tobacco through the labor of negro slaves. But another destiny awaited them. The divine disposal of these men was quite different from this. Their little ship in her voyage bore too far northward even for the northern Virginia which they sought. Their eyes never saw that shore, and when land at length appeared it was the rugged coast of

Massachusetts. They were now too much wearied by long tossing on the deep to seek for any other, and here they resolved to land. But before they should land they had something to consider. They carried no royal charter. Their landing place was not within the limits of the Virginia company. They must, however, have some bond of law—some recognised political order and constituted authority—to carry ashore along with them. A political compact was drawn up in the little cabin of the “Mayflower” and signed by every man of the pilgrim band. They put their hands to the instrument which bound them to order in a political society. They asserted and confessed its authority. All this they did of their own free will and accord, and then they sought a fitting landing place. Slowly and with much toil they gained the shore, and on Plymouth Rock they planted the system of popular government—a government of the people by the people. This was God’s disposal of these pilgrims. Their own human proposal, as I have said, would in all probability have made them planters of tobacco by negro slaves, but the divine disposal made them planters of free popular government in America.

Thus God works in history, opening new epochs and new fields to civilization. In the early dawn and opening day of human history, Asia, the cradle of our race, had its time of greatness. For more than twenty centuries past, Europe has held the palm, and its order of civilization has been dominant in human affairs. In the discovery and planting of America, God’s high

purpose is visible. Here is a vast continent—a new world—with unfathomed resources and rapid and rapidly augmenting means of communication with the old world, offering an outlet to its superabundant populations—thus placing them in new spheres of activity under a new set of conditions. Chief among these is the acknowledged right to manage their own affairs—to govern themselves without let or hindrance from mere inherited or traditional privileges, which lie as a depressing weight on the masses of the people of the older lands of Asia and Europe. The full significance and matured promise of American civilization lie in the future, and are not to be reached by any royal road or easy way, but through much stumbling and struggles and tribulation, as we may clearly see at this time.

With the landing of the Puritan Pilgrims begins the history of popular government on this continent. From their small beginning the order of society which they introduced grew and flourished. At home the Puritans were the steady opponents of arbitrary power. To their struggles is the England of to-day indebted for constitutional freedom. This is conceded by the best thinkers. If we have the house of Hanover now on the English throne, ruling there according to constitutional law, instead of the house of Stuart ruling according to irresponsible will, it is because the Puritans, in the days of their sorest trial, resolutely stood in defence of the primal rights of man. Fixed in England, and working through the forms of society

existing there, the principles of Puritanism produced a constitutional monarchy, and tamed the intolerance of the national hierarchy. Removed to an American wilderness and left to the freest possible development, they produced a democratic commonwealth—a commonwealth wherein the people were their own direct and only rulers. This type of political society gradually propagated itself through adjacent regions of America until it became the prevailing type throughout a large portion of this continent. It fitted the time, the place, and the people. In the divine order of events America became the theatre where all the capabilities of the individual man had scope for development with the least possible hindrance. God transferred the seed of a civilized race to this continent to the end that a new order of society might be brought forth, capable of meeting the exigencies of a new world—an order of society wherein every man's skill and power, whether of mind or muscle, should be brought into full play under the most encouraging conditions, to subdue the wide domain of nature which lay between the Atlantic and the Pacific. It was not given to the Puritans to see the grandeur of prolific promise which their enterprise carried with it. They were men of intense religious convictions, but not of broad social or political views. They would be loyal to the death to their own ideas of right. They would permit no man to stand between them and their God. And thus falling back on the inborn rights of the soul, they became the providential instruments of a greater

work than they contemplated. The founders of popular government in America, they became the founders of popular education. If men were to be their own rulers they saw that they should be educated for the responsibility. And from the colonies established by the Puritans have gone forth the educators to every other settlement and state within the American Union. A great material prosperity has attended the steps of these free, self-governing states. They felled the forests of the North. They ploughed the prairies of the West. They floated ships on lake and river and ocean. Thus self-governing and prosperous, these states communicated an influence, and gave an impetus to other lands along their borders, and our own Canada has been aided in progress and prosperity by the progress and prosperity of our neighbors. Hence it came to pass that this whole continent of North America became a land of promise to the oppressed, impoverished, and enterprising in all European lands. Celt and Teuton and Scandinavian thronged by hundreds of thousands to its shores, planting their homes on its broad domain—the instruments of a divine purpose in building up a new order of society.

Where the material success of a people outstrips the moral development, the result must be disastrous. This it would be well for us in Canada to bear in mind, and with all humility we should read the lessons of the present sad and distracted period of American history.* Let us not suppose that the people of the United

* Spoken in December, 1862.

States, on whom the present great calamities have fallen, are sinners above all others that dwell on this continent. Verily, unless we repent we shall all likewise suffer. No man nor nation can outwit God, or set at nought his law with impunity. The people of the United States are and have been human, and prone to all human errors. The common vices which attend a rapid material prosperity have been theirs. "A thorn in the flesh was given them," as to the apostle of old,—“a messenger of Satan to buffet them, lest they should be exalted above measure.” But they dallied with the thorn instead of plucking it out, and it bred a festering sore in their body politic, corrupting it and inflaming it, until it has come to threaten its very life. In the importation of negro slaves into Virginia about the same time that the Pilgrims landed in Massachusetts, we see the foundation laid of another order of society, and a very different one from theirs. In the system of slavery we see the principal rights of man ignored. The type of society thus introduced into the Virginia colony grew after its kind, and matured into an extensive oligarchy, spreading southward into the regions which invited slave labor. There was no popular education there. Out of that instinctive dread of popular education which inheres in an oligarchy, we find the Governor of Virginia, full sixty years after the settlement of the colony, writing to the English Privy Council, and thanking God that they had no free schools nor printing among them. On the conjoint basis of negro

slavery and popular ignorance, an order of society was built up in the Southern Colonies of England in America, altogether different from that which prevailed in the Northern Colonies. And when their day of revolution came, and their assertion of an independent nationality in a federal union, although a common danger and a common hope bound North and South together, yet were the constituent parts of their separate social order widely dissimilar. In the North, labor was the work of freemen, and esteemed honorable. In the South, labor was the work of slaves, and regarded as menial. In the Northern States the many made the laws for the benefit of the many. In the Southern States the few made the laws for the benefit of the few. It is evident that a free democracy based on the primal rights of man, and a slave-holding oligarchy based on a denial of those rights, could not act together in a national capacity without some surrender on the one side or the other. The fathers and founders of the American Union, engaged in a common struggle for the rights of self-government, took their stand on the democratic principle. In their celebrated declaration, they affirmed the equal and original rights of all men. In their deed of national compact, they did not give the word Slavery any place. They regarded it as a temporary institution, to be borne with for a time, until it should gradually decay, through the working of free institutions.

What has been the result? Quite different from that which the fathers of the Union looked for. The

pilgrims, standing on the natural rights of man, planted popular government on this continent. One hundred and fifty years afterwards the founders of the American Union formally reaffirmed the political principles of the pilgrims in organizing their federal nationality. For two years past that nationality has been assailed by an insurrection within its own borders which imperils its existence. Wherefore is this so after more than eighty years of prosperous material growth? Is it because the natural rights of man cannot be safely acknowledged by man? Is it because the principles of free popular government have been tried and found wanting? Not at all. They have not been honestly tried, but have been held in abeyance through the insidious working of an oligarchy. For a generation past, the American Union, nominally free and popular in its government, has been controlled and ruled by an oligarchy of slaveholders. This body of men, fewer in number than half the population of New York city, have managed, through party combinations, to control the Union for their own purposes. In the interest of slavery they annexed Texas, made war on Mexico, held an Ostend Conference to acquire Cuba, invaded the metropolis of New England with slave hunters, and broke down the barriers which protected freedom in the territories. All these things the Southern oligarchy did, aided and abetted by the ignorance and indifference of a large proportion of the Northern people to the first principles of natural right. And when these principles are disregarded in a popular system of

government its course must be swiftly downward and destructive. The steady policy of the dominant oligarchy was to circumscribe the area of human liberty, and contravene the free popular principles of government planted by the Puritans. To this policy they had committed the American nation. This was a very different result, I say, from that which the founders of the Union contemplated. But the cause thereof is evident. Within forty years the cotton crop of the Slave States increased tenfold, and the demand kept pace with the increase. Here was a mine of wealth opened and worked by slave labor, which dazzled the vision of the slaveholders and fired their lust for gain. Their dazzled vision no longer looked on slavery after the manner of their fathers, as an anomalous institution, to be tolerated for a time. New light dawned upon them, as the unpaid labor of the African race continued year after year to gather ever-increasing wealth into their barns. Slavery became divine in their eyes—an institution to be perpetually cherished and preserved. Free labor came to be regarded as a political nuisance and free laborers a peril to society. Here was a denial of popular rights—a manifest hostility to free political institutions. This spirit of the oligarchy strangled the principles of free popular government. The position taken by the fathers of the Union, on the natural rights of man, was abandoned by those who came to have control of the national affairs. And hence the searching ordeal to which the American Union is subjected at this hour. “Behold the

Lord's hand is not shortened." If men or nations will "hatch cockatrice' eggs," they may expect to feel the serpent's fang.

Men may push their human purposes according to their selfish interests, their wilfulness and their predominating passions—thus may they "cast the lot into the lap" of history, "but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." All hopeful human progress must be worked out on a field of freedom, where the natural rights of every man must be not only conceded but protected, no matter what may be his height, weight, or color. All laws enacted to the prejudice of men on account of these distinctions, or any of them, are essentially unjust—out of the line of the divine order, and at variance with the infinite justice of God. How then, are we to regard the present conflict in the neighboring States in its relation to the high purpose of Providence with respect to this continent? In looking at this question we have to clear away a cloud of passion and misapprehension. For, mixed up with this conflict we have seen a spirit of hostility manifested towards the old land from which the Pilgrims sprung, and with which we ourselves have a privileged connection. This hostility, in the manner and measure of its expression, and in view of the simple facts of the case, has been unreasonable and unjust, and has been prejudicial to the Federal cause in the mind of the English-speaking populations of the globe. Its existence, however, may be readily explained, and may be extenuated. A man cannot be expected to

look at things reasonably, or express himself calmly, when a strong and desperate hand is at his throat and a loaded revolver at his head. And this has been the situation of the neighboring nation of the United States for two years past, as it is at this day.

I gladly recognise, however, in welcome contrast to this spirit of hostility, the movement lately set on foot by some generous merchants of New York to contribute to the relief of the suffering operatives of Lancashire. Their humane words and Christian deeds will live in history. Theirs is a more patriotic, because a more honorable and Christian work than crimination. It will be far more serviceable to their country. For thus do the Divine laws act:—In giving scope to our more enlarged sympathies, the benefit returns in increasing measure from the circumference to the centre. The blessing does not rest wholly on the receiver, but falls back on the giver likewise, on him and his. “Remember the words of the Lord Jesus” For my part I shall utter no word of crimination or recrimination at a juncture like the present. It does not belong to the Christian pulpit to inflame the passions of men. At such times it is best for the prophets of every land to keep their rebukes within their own borders. And here I gratefully call to mind the language of one of New England’s saintliest sons, spoken from his pulpit in the metropolis of the Pilgrim State at a time when hostile passions ran high between the Old England and the New. During the last war which was waged between Great Britain and the

United States the calm voice of Channing was heard—the voice of a true Christian Prophet of the Lord—bearing generous testimony to the foe which then openly threatened their shores. Then was the old nation spoken of as “an illustrious nation, which for ages has defended and nurtured the interests of religion, science and humanity; a nation to which grateful Europe is now offering acknowledgments for the protection she has extended over the oppressed. . . .” “When such a nation is our foe,” he continues, “we should feel it unworthy and debasing to encourage a rancorous and vindictive spirit. Let not approaching danger disturb recollections or unsettle our principles.” I had read these words before this year, or the last, but not until I had witnessed the excitement of these times of war, and the imperious sway which popular passion exercises over all organs of public utterance, did I appreciate the prophetic courage of that heroic and saintly man as he lifted up his voice to mitigate national asperities and vindicate the character of an open foe. All honor to the heroic soul that could hold fast by love and justice amid the rising tides of tumult which would sweep both away. His last public utterance was for the freedom of the slave, being an address on the anniversary of emancipation in the British West Indies. On his way homeward after that noble utterance he was prostrated by bodily illness, and amid the glories of an autumn sunset, among the hills of Vermont, on the Lord’s day, he closed his eyes in the sleep of death. All honor, I say again, to his saintly

spirit. God sendeth such as he as lights and landmarks for the ages. He died twenty years ago, but

“ What words he spoke for freedom shall not die.”

Aside, then, from any transient cloud of passion or misapprehension, let us look at the matter in the light of fixed principles of freedom and justice. Of the two parties to this sad conflict, which is the more clearly in the line of the divine order? The Federal Government is obviously hampered by constitutional limitations which it is bound to respect. These limitations have reference to its own partial national interests, and hold it back from open declaration in favor of unconditional liberty and justice for all classes of men. Hence the halting gait with which it approaches the one grand issue of this contest. Now this is human—pertaining to all human governments—to study their partial national interests before universal human interests. It is visibly stamped on the policy of every government, whether its form be democracy, monarchy or oligarchy. The Federal Government, however, in the drift of its policy is making decisive approaches toward freedom. It may be said that it does so as a matter of policy only, and not as a matter of principle. Now this is human too. Man acts from mixed motives, and the best of us would not aver that he always acted from motives pure and simple. I look at facts as developed in this conflict, and accept with gratitude every indication of an advancing regard for freedom. In looking at the policy of the insurgent Confederacy I

can see no ray of hope for the millions of my fellow-men which its oligarchy holds in bondage. Its avowed purpose of basing its contemplated nationality on human slavery as the corner-stone, ought to be regarded as an outrage to the moral sense of the civilized world. It is at variance with justice and divine order, and though it should appear to succeed for a time, it must come to nought in the end. When I look from the declaration of such a policy to that made by the President of the Federal Government in his latest message, I can have no doubt as to which is the more clearly on the side of divine law and order. He urges emancipation, and pleads for freedom, as against timid and halting counsels. He says to his country, "as our case is new, so must we think anew and act anew. * * * In giving freedom to the slave we assure freedom to the free." Here is a declaration clearly in harmony with justice, favorable to human progress, and looking to a higher order of civilization on this continent. As to the proximate issue of the great conflict in the neighboring States, I offer no prediction. Whichever way it may terminate as a struggle of armed forces, I have no fear for the ultimate moral result. The iniquity of slavery will be stricken, and its life shortened. America was not discovered to give a permanent home to a system of human oppression which would not be tolerated for an hour in any European land. The divine providence does not work backwards after this fashion. Free popular government was not planted in America by the Puritan Pilgrims, watered by their

tears, and sanctified by their prayers and sufferings, to be superseded or permanently checked by the designs of an oligarchy eager for the buying and selling and enslavement and perpetual degradation of a weaker race of fellowmen. The stars of the firmament may fall from their courses and the hills of the earth may topple from their foundations, but the onward march of God's providential order, by the way of justice, liberty and love, will be onward still. From ocean to ocean stretches this new continent with its spreading miles of virgin soil in every degree of latitude, inviting settlers from the older lands to fell and plough and sow, themselves the owners sole, with no lord of domain between them and the Lord of all. God has indicated its destiny as a large habitation, where the humanity of man and the dignity of labor will be recognised, and have fitting respect. We, of this generation, stand only on the threshold of American history, yet have we entered on goodly cities which we builded not, and vineyards which we planted not. In our own day we labor, and others will enter into our labors. The men of this generation may stumble in their march, but God guides the pilgrimage to a consummate civilization—to an order of society wherein the working forces and gracious influences of the Gospel will have done their work in loosing the bands of wickedness and breaking every yoke, in convincing men of sin and lifting them into practical harmony with God. So may Christ visibly reign among men, his law rule in their institutions, and God be glorified in all.

SERMON XIII.

THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF SACRIFICE.*

“The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices, which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. * * *

* * * * *

He said, Sacrifice and offering burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein, which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first that he may establish the second.”—*Heb.* x. 1, 8, 9.

WE meet this morning, my friends, within the walls of a renewed—I may say of a new—temple. Two summers have passed since the walls of the former building

* Preached on Sunday, 12th Sept., 1858, when the new and enlarged Church, styled the Church of the Messiah, built by the Montreal Unitarian Congregation, was opened and set apart for the purposes of public worship. It is erected on the site of the former Church, which was built by the same worshipping society, and dedicated in 1845. The foundation walls of the former building to the full extent of their length, and to the height of the flooring above the basement room, have been used in the present one; and additions made at either end. The enlargement of the building and the character of the ground demanded an entire change of architectural style. The former edifice was of the Grecian order.

were dismantled and removed to make way for the larger one which we now occupy. As the result of some sacrifice, and not a little exertion on your part, this fair and enlarged house of worship stands here to-day looking down on the busy city below, as our former one did during the thirteen years of its existence. In opening it now for the sacred purposes of its erection, as a home and an altar for our common worship as Christian disciples, and while the prayer and hymn of dedication are yet fresh in our hearts, and sounding in our ears, I would invite you to consider briefly with me a topic which immediately touches, and directly involves, the essence of Christian worship. If we would make the glory of this our second temple transcend that of the first, we must look farther and deeper than any outward ritual or material adornment—we must duly consider, and rightly appreciate, and reverently render, that inward and spiritual service to which we are called by Christianity, and which it is the special glory of the Gospel to promote and extend among men. The Jew had only one temple in which the acceptable worship of a proper sacrifice could be rendered. The Lord Christ broke down this peculiarity by the announcement that the Father could be worshipped everywhere. In the light of the Gospel it became clear that outward sacrifices were of no more avail. Yet the Christian worship has its own proper sacrifice. If Christ annulled the outward, it was that he might set forth the inward. If he took away the one, it was that he might establish the other. Taking the passage of Scripture just cited,

then, as a text, let me ask your attention to some remarks on the *Christian Idea of Sacrifice*.

The religious sentiment in man has always manifested itself in acts of sacrifice. Go where we will, and as far back as we will in the history of our race, we find sacrifice in some form. The most ancient Indian and Egyptian, the Greek and Roman of classic history, the Scandinavian of Northern Europe, and the Aztec of Southern America—the representatives of all forms of civilization and barbarism, have expressed their worship more or less in this way. Men every where, and in all conditions of their earthly existence, were prompted by an instinct of their nature which they could not resist, to look out of themselves to some other and higher Power. Amid the magnitude and mystery and bounty of the outward world their feelings of awe and wonder and gratitude were excited, and through conscience, also, they were awakened to a sense of weakness and want within. This led them to look out of themselves, and seek a connection with some being whereby they might be helped and strengthened, and through which they might receive some rest and satisfaction. Hence came worship in its varied methods and manifestations.

The character of a people's worship would depend of course, on their conception of its object. A stern and cruel deity would be served by stern and cruel rites. A God of a more mild and merciful cast would have a corresponding service. In their acts of sacrifice they would be ruled by their predominating idea, and

as they regarded their posture toward the deity as one of connection or of alienation, so would their sacrifice be one of gratitude and praise, or one of penitence and propitiation—a thank-offering, or a sin-offering. You will observe that I refer the custom of sacrifice to a natural origin. In opposition to this view many persons maintain that it was from the first a divine institution—*i. e.*, an institution specially commanded by God. I can see no reason why we should affirm or believe such a thing, for certainly we have no record of any such command in the Bible. The first mention we have of sacrifice is to be found in the offering of Cain and Abel, but there is no divine command set forth in connection with them. The Scripture simply informs us that “Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and the fat thereof.” (*Gen.* iv. 2, 3, 4.) Each man brought of his store, such as it was, and offered it to the Lord. They acknowledged an unseen God not only as their own Creator, but as the source, likewise, of all that the earth did yield and the flock bring forth. And, prompted by gratitude and reverence, they gave a visible token of that acknowledgment by the outward offering taken from their fields and flocks.

If we can find in the nature of the case an adequate explanation of the origin of sacrifice, we are not called on—the accepted rules of investigation rather forbid

us—to seek any other. The custom fell into fearful and most hideous abuse, as when human beings were made victims, and even parents offered their children. The fact that human sacrifices have been almost, if not quite universally, prevalent among the various tribes and nations of the earth, stands as a sad commentary on the natural and unguided proclivities of the human race. Deep in the recesses of the forest the Druid slew his victims. High up on the pyramid, and upon a block of jasper, the Aztec priest officiated at his horrid rites. In the rude ritual of the ancient Canaanites the cry of burning children was lost to hearing in the savage din of drums and trumpets. In such sacrifices we see the most awful and revolting perversion of the religious sentiment which the history of man affords. An abuse so shocking and unnatural could exist only among people where right ideas of God had faded away, and the prevailing deity had become the reflected image of some of the worst human passions. It must have come from the feeling of alienation. They felt that their God stood wrathfully apart from them, and such hideous sacrifices were designed to propitiate him. This feeling of alienation is natural to man. His conscience tells him how far he falls short of—how much he sins against—his ideal excellence. His own moral nature is offended, and surely so likewise must his God be offended. No victim short of the most precious, or that which will fully represent what is most precious, is adequate to express his regret for the separation, and the most precious is offered. The child is given by the

parent, in some cases the monarch is taken from the throne, for the sacrifice. The captive taken in war is brought to the altar, and through the sacrifice of that human life, as representing that which is most precious upon earth, the worshipper seeks to placate his God. The sacrifices are offered—will God accept them, and be appeased and conciliated? In some such way do I satisfy myself concerning the origin of such fearful abuse of sacrifice.

The abuse here, following the general law in such things, came from the use. Nothing is clearer in human experience than the sense of sin. And this sense of sin brings with it the sense of separation from God. The soul awakened to a consciousness of this separation feels ill at ease. Life becomes darkened, and the universe a hopeless puzzle. The man feels that reconciliation with his God is needful to the adjustment and satisfaction of his moral nature. The sin is confessed, and the sacrifice offered as an outward and emphatic symbol of the feeling within. Will God accept the offering, forgive the sin, and relieve the soul? This seems to be the simple and natural theory of the sin offering. Scarcely any subject connected with religion has been more confused, and complicated by theological discussion, than this one of sacrifice. The amount of learning, ingenuity and patience that has been expended upon it has been immense, and, as it seems to me, mainly to the darkening of counsel. Whatever may be the interest of such discussions to the student of opinion, to the

simple religious soul they bring but little profit. With respect, again, to the thank-offerings, or sacrifices of thanksgiving, what can be more natural and fit than they? Man finds himself in a world of mystery, beauty and bounty. Sky above him, and earth beneath, minister to his enjoyment. He feels himself dependent, and in his best and most deeply meditative hours his soul dilates with gratitude to the source of such varied gifts and mercies. He is thankful, and he takes of what he has received and makes a visible offering which symbolises the state of his mind and heart.

In the Mosaic economy of religion we find the practice of sacrifice recognised and divinely regulated. Among the Hebrews prior to the giving of the law it was not reduced to any special system. Every man might offer his own sacrifice, though it was generally confided to some person of greater distinction—the head of the family or the like. But under Moses we find it organized into a divine institution, the various kinds of offerings being minutely specified, and an order of men appointed to take charge of them on behalf of God, and mediate between Jehovah and his people. The sacrifice was the central point of the ritual of the Hebrews. For it the priesthood and temple existed, and were sustained. The central point of a ritual divinely instituted, we are authorized in looking to it for some special symbolic meaning, and seek in its temporary and limited form, a substance permanent and universal.

Theologians quite commonly tell us that the whole ritual of the Hebrews pointed to the Gospel, and that the high sacrifice thereof typified that of the Lord Christ. I accept the statement in its broadest and deepest meaning, without pledging myself to verbal and specific details. All sacrifice I regard as symbolical of the proper Christian sacrifice, which is, *the destruction of self-will, to the end that the will of God may take its place, and rule supreme in the soul.* This is the substance of all proper sacrifice, and it was shown forth in a dim and imperfect way by the sacrifices of the Mosaic law. Therein it appeared in and by "a shadow." But in Christ the substance took form—actual and perfect form. In him it became embodied in a living and visible person, and was thus projected into the field of human history. For high and providential purposes it was thus presented—a complete representation—"the very image" of the proper sacrifice required of man, and through which he is to be made perfect. Christ was the end of the Mosaic law. In his death on Calvary the Hebrew ritual was brought to a close. This was the announcement that thenceforth the character of the sacrifice was to be changed. It was to assume grander proportions, and to touch man at every point of his most hidden life and being. Through centuries of training in the school of Moses, by varied rite and symbol, was the world led to the open and full manifestation of the reality which formed the substance of the symbol. The shadow passed away, as the full and perfect image, which was shown in Christ, rose upon the world.

Says the writer to the Hebrews, in our text :—“ The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. Sacrifice and offering, he said, and burnt offering and offering for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein, which are offered by the law ; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.”

You will remember, I hope, what this epistle is, from which our text is taken. It is a letter written by a Hebrew to Hebrews in the first age of Christianity, almost eighteen centuries ago. It was written most probably while the temple was yet standing in Jerusalem, and the Jewish ritual still observed. Under these circumstances the writer's thoughts naturally flowed into the Jewish moulds of language. The gospel was opposed by its adversaries attached to the Mosaic ritual, as slighting that ritual, and destructive thereof. And the writer, to give assurance and courage to the Jewish converts to Christianity, some of whom might be wavering in their profession, proceeds to show that so far from slighting the ceremonial of Judaism, it completely fulfilled it. With this view he presents the sanctuary, the priests, and the sacrifices, to set forth Christ, and as figures to illustrate Christ's mission and work. Had the Jews a tabernacle and sanctuary ? So had the Christians :—a “ true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man.” (viii. 2.)

Had the Jews a high-priest? So had the Christians:—a “great high-priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God;” (iv. 14.)—“a high-priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands.” (ix. 11.) Had the Jews a sacrifice? So had the Christians. But the Christians’ high-priest “needed not daily, as the high-priests of the Jews did, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s; for this he did once, when he offered up himself.” (vii. 27.) *He offered up himself.* I ask you to mark this. Here the priest and the sacrifice are identical. This is self-dedication—self-sacrifice. In Christ it was unre-served, complete, perfect. As such it was the consummation of all that was typified and shadowed forth by the former ritual.

For, when we come to reflect upon the matter, what is the fundamental idea involved in all sacrifice? Is it not this—the acknowledgment of God’s right and dominion over man, and over all that man possesses, whether of inward faculty or outward thing? In sacrifice, man, by offering a part, sets forth his obligation to God for the whole. In ritual times the extent of the obligation was sometimes forgotten, and the substantial idea lost sight of. Then the rite became a hollow form, and was displeasing to God. The priest might practice his ritual, as he was bound to do, but when he and people alike lost sight of its inward significance and proper end, the prophet was raised to announce its significance, and proclaim the will of God anew to

both priest and people. And I need not remind you with what emphasis and power those old Hebrew prophets spake, in calling the nation back to God, and to obedience to God's will. "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord?" demands Samuel: and his testimony is "Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 *Sam.* xv. 22.) "Hear the word of the Lord," cries Isaiah, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord, I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth, they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear; your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." (*Is.* i. 11—17.) Thus it was, that when, through spiritual blindness, the inward significance and ultimate purpose of the ritual was lost sight of, mercy,

and not sacrifice, became the emphatic demand—the inward and active principle of holy obedience, not the outward and dead form of a ritual observance. Man might offer a part of his outward substance as a sacrifice to God, and yet make no soul-offering at all—not even the faintest feeling of penitence, the feeblest emotion of gratitude, or the slightest movement of desire toward a thorough and loving obedience. But in such an offering there was no meaning. In such an offering there could be no value.

Take up the fundamental idea just referred to, and trace it to its last result, and what is its legitimate requisition? God's dominion over man is acknowledged. In the ritual sacrifice man offers a part of his outward substance, and of his inward being, in token of his obligation to God. A part, I say, but why only *a part*? Where can he draw the line and say, this is verily God's, and this is not? No such line can be drawn, for all is God's, and the ultimate indication, therefore, is, that in a full and true service *all* must be offered to him. So long as anything is kept back the service is incomplete. Now in view of this may we see how significant the mission of the Lord Jesus was, as fulfilling the former law, and opening a new spiritual economy. Jesus kept nothing back. His offering was complete—being nothing short of himself—heart and soul and mind and strength. The key-note of his advent was "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." His daily meat, as he said, was to do the will of his Father who sent him. To him the universe was an open temple,

and every thought, feeling, word and act became consecrate to God. His was a complete self-surrender, and he became the willing and devoted instrument of the Father in his high purposes of love. The great and constant sacrifice of Christ was brought to a close by his death on Calvary, the blood of which stands as the seal thereof to all people, speaking better things than the blood of Abel, and testifying a love unparalleled and most attractive,—a love sufficient to draw all men unto him. In that death on Calvary we see the grand turning point and link of the two dispensations. In that perfect sacrifice of Christ we see the close of all ritual sacrifice, and the consummation, as I have said, of the complete and proper sacrifice. Now that the proper sacrifice is made manifest, the imperfect symbol is annulled. A new epoch is begun, and as the previous ritual had partially shadowed forth what was fully accomplished in and by Christ: so now does he, the Messiah, become “the very image” and type of the new order of sacrifice required by the new dispensation—a sacrifice wherein nothing can be withheld, but in which *all* must be offered. We only require to look at the Gospel narratives to see how completely our Lord gave up his will, and the strength of his life, to God. We see there how he became a living and willing sacrifice, undeterred by the opposition which beset him, or the suffering which stared him in the face. Tempted as we are, yet without sin, he went out day by day and braved the frowns and threats and evil treatment of wicked men in doing his

Father's will, and carrying forward his Father's work. And then by night he sought fresh strength amid the stillness of the olive groves in prayer to God. No earthly mind understood him, or appreciated his purpose. In solitary spiritual majesty he moved among men, winning hearts, and conquering the souls who were to be witnesses for him when he should be taken away. Yet his closest friends and dearest disciples did not discern the actual grandeur of his character. They knew that he loved them, and they loved him in return, but they could not comprehend his full spiritual proportions. No earthly home had he. The foxes had holes and the birds of the air had nests, but he had not where to lay his head. And the hour was coming when his chosen disciples should be scattered, every man to his own, leaving him alone, and without a companion on earth to utter a word of sympathy, and yet he could say he was not alone, for the Father was with him. Such was the life of the Lord Christ. No selfishness was in it, nor shadow of self-seeking. A sacrifice it was, from its beginning to its close. And when the close came, it was sacrifice still. The cross was raised, and he was lifted up thereon. Its agony was borne, for the key-note of his advent still sounded clear and strong through all the chambers of his being: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." Amid the tears of Gethsemane, in those closing hours of his life, we still hear him pray, and say "Father, not my will, but thy will be done."

I have now indicated the complete and proper sacri-

fi ce as shown forth in and by Christ. And hereby may we see the nature of the sacrifice required of the Christian, as distinguished from that which was required of the Hebrew. If the blood of animals, and the outward offering be no longer demanded at the altar within the temple, it is that soul and body, thought and life be surrendered to the willing service of God in all places. If the Messiah took away the one, it was that he might establish the other. Remember the key-note of his life: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." Linked to his Lord by a living tie of love, gratitude and sympathy, the genuine disciple will find that this key-note is for him likewise. For him, too, the universe is the temple, and every spot where a Christian man stands is an altar. In view of the clear and close relation which the Christian can see and recognise between himself and his God, this full sacrifice of obedient service is most fit and reasonable. So the apostle Paul, in his letter to the Romans, confidently writes: "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (xii. 1.)

This, then, is the Christian Sacrifice—the complete dedication of ourselves to God. This is the full service which the former ritual service but faintly and partially prefigured. The Christian man discerns that not only what he has, but likewise what he is, comes from God, and he would consecrate all, in its use and purpose to the Giver. This perfect surrender of self, and thorough devotion of every feeling and faculty to the Highest—

this, whether in earth or heaven, is the summit of religious effort, the crowning result of religious aspiration.

Would it not be well for the world if this doctrine of the Christian sacrifice could be every where presented to men in its simplicity? Christ's mission was a ministry of reconciliation by sacrifice. The sacrifice of a contrite heart, moved by penitence like that of the prodigal in the Lord's parable, we know our Heavenly Father will not despise. In this touching parable the whole method of atonement or reconciliation is revealed. In the light of the better hope brought in by Christ may we see that if we draw nigh to God after the manner of the prodigal's penitence, and with vital faith in Christ's complete sacrifice—such a faith therein as availeth to mould our lives according to the spirit and pattern of our Lord's perfect life—God will draw nigh to us, and we shall find the joy of the reconciliation. But the theology of the current orthodoxy comes in to perplex men here, and to obscure the simplicity of Christ. It still lingers among Judaic elements, and insists that certain Levitical ideas shall be carried into Christianity. Men's minds are held in bondage thereto, and traditional prejudices block up the way of progress for the pure and simple Gospel. Theology, which is always to be distinguished from religion, is a human science, and is fluctuating in its character, not fixed. The student of theological opinion, as he traces its past history, can recognise and distinctly mark the various epochs of its development, just as the student of geology can mark the various epochs of the earth's

formation. In the early ages of the church it was a prevalent opinion of theologians that the devil had a right over men, and that Christ gave up his life as a ransom to him, so that men might be made free of the devil's claim and dominion. Thus argues Irenæus in the second century: "A ransom," he says, "is paid to deliver captives from the hands of their enemies. But if Christ gave his life a ransom for us, to whom did he give it? It must have been to an enemy who held us captive. And who could this be except the devil?" This view, absurd as it may now appear to us, could be maintained by a partial and literal interpretation of certain texts of Scripture. In the lapse of time this theory lost its hold, and other opinions became from time to time the prevalent and popular ones. Calvin in the sixteenth century wrote, in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*,* that Christ "was appointed to this purpose, with his sacrifice to appease the wrath of God." "This is our acquittal," he says, "that the guiltiness which made us subject to punishment, is removed upon the head of the Son of God. For this setting of one against the other, we ought principally to hold fast, lest we tremble, and be careful all our life long, as though the just vengeance of God did hang over us, which the Son of God hath taken upon himself." This is the doctrine of vicarious atonement, or sacrifice of substitution, which may be regarded as the conventional orthodoxy of our day. By far the most popular preacher of Great Britain reiterates the Calvinistic dogma, and proclaims

* Book ii. ch. xvi. xvii.

that the Gospel is, in one word, Substitution. A leading divine* of the metropolis of New England, in a sermon recently published, declares that "sin can be forgiven only by faith in Jesus Christ, who, by his sufferings and death, is a substitute for the sinner, and constitutes for him a righteousness which takes away his condemnation, and prepares for his sanctification and salvation." These are the utterances of current Protestant orthodoxy, and they indicate the stage of development which its theology has reached. It is not allowed to rest here, however, for among the ablest opponents of this theory of substitution and vicarious atonement, are now to be found men in connection with churches which still acknowledged the traditional orthodox creeds. Never before were these creeds subjected to so severe a test as they are just now, in the rising and agitated tide of human thought. They are strained and straining at every point, like the worn-out ship when the swell of the ocean heaves her to and fro, and the strong gales of the Atlantic press upon every spar. It is not to be denied that this theory of Calvin, like that of Irenæus in the second century, may be maintained by a partial and literal interpretation of certain passages of Scripture. But the literal interpretation of figurative language in the Bible must, in the course of time, and in the light of clearer knowledge, be abandoned, and an interpretation given and acknowledged, which will harmonize with the general scope of the sacred records, and with the admitted

* Dr. N. Adams of Boston, in Discourse on Endless Punishment.

attributes of God. We are of those who look forward with perfect confidence to that coming time of clearer light, when the obscurities and perplexities which human speculation has thrown around this doctrine of the Christian Sacrifice will be dispelled, and the doctrine itself stand forth in its simplicity and comprehensiveness, its spiritual depth and grandeur, and full practical power.

The conventional orthodoxy, resting in its vicarious element, does not come up to the proper Christian idea of sacrifice. But we must not halt with orthodoxy at this, its lower level, as if there were nothing higher to be attained. We shall surely perplex ourselves, and run risk of the worst errors of the worst outward ritualism of former times if we suffer ourselves to rest in any thought or belief which throws the slightest tinge of ill-will into our conception of the great and loving God. He is verily a just God, but his love keeps constant march with his justice. Christ is a loving Savior, but in his perfect character, justice also asserts its claim, step by step, with the claims of love. Most perplexing and perilous will it be for us if we rest in any thought which relaxes the strictness of individual responsibility in the matter of sin and righteousness, by any dogmatic representations of the arbitrary transfer of one or other — of sin to the righteous or of righteousness to the sinner. Most perplexing and perilous will it be for us if we allow ourselves to believe that Christ had any measure of love for us which the Father had not, or that any throb of forgiving pity toward men was felt

by him which was not felt in all its fulness by the gracious and almighty God himself. God and Christ—the Father and the Son—are in strict harmony at every point in the work of elevating and saving men, redeeming them from sin, and leading them to righteousness. God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and if we follow Christ in the spirit of his perfect sacrifice—surrendering ourselves to the willing service of God—Christ will be in us the hope of glory. “I and my Father are one,” said Jesus. They are in close and constant union. The will of the Father is still the will of the faithful and devoted Son. And the prayer of Jesus is that all his disciples may be lifted through the power of spiritual sympathy into the same blessed union, and held there by the bond of a willing obedience. I pray, saith he, “that they all may be one, as thou, Father art, in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.” All self-will and opposing will annihilated, and the will of God reigning supreme in every intelligent soul—this is the consummation which the Gospel proposes to effect. To this end the Lord instructs his disciples to pray in their daily prayer that God’s will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The spring of the highest life in man—the life which comes from perfect surrender of self-will to the will of God—is the appreciation and appropriation of the sacrifice of Christ, *i.e.*, of the spirit which led to that sacrifice. As a manifestation of love it appeals to the affections, and enlists this strongest part of our nature on the side of God. All other priests and high-priests

had offered a part. Jesus, the true high-priest of the new dispensation, offered the whole—even himself. He is “the very image” and full representation of that of which the law was but “a shadow.” He is the perfect type of that complete sacrifice of which the law was the imperfect one. Thus does he open up a new and living way wherein all men are called to become priests unto God, and offer unto him the sacrifice of a consecrated heart and life. In a word, according to the Christian idea, each man is to offer up himself as a “living sacrifice.”

According to this view of the Christian Sacrifice you will at once observe how vast must be the sweep of its application. Looking at the matter, however, as it is commonly apprehended, we find two differing methods adopted, which we may characterize respectively as the contemplative and the active.

In the former, *i.e.*, in the contemplative method, the Christian, to the end that he may present himself a living sacrifice unto God, withdraws from the sphere of active life among men. His leading idea in doing so is one which existed before Christianity, and had its origin in the ancient notion of an essential antagonism between spirit and matter, and between God and the common world of men and things. Hence he is led to separate himself, and devote himself wholly to devout meditation. Multitudes of most earnest souls have thus devoted themselves. Freely giving up all the advantages and enjoyments of social life, they have sought solitude in order to offer themselves

more completely to God. Here they sought and found their highest luxury in contemplation and prayer. Recognising God as the fountain of all being, and the Lord of all that exists, they have made free-will offering to him of all thought and feeling, and so far as human effort could reach they have striven to merge themselves in the Infinite.

Let us do justice to the contemplative method, and confess the devoted piety which it has cherished and perfected. In cell and in cloister has it kept its patient and joyful vigils. Narrowing the wants of the body within the smallest possible limits it has bestowed all thought upon the soul. Rigidly has it scrutinized the soul, deep has been its penitence and high its aspiration. No delight has it sought in earthly things, lest heaven should lose thereby somewhat of its rightful due. It has tortured the flesh so that it might tame it, and subdue it utterly. And this, to the end that the soul should be more free to give itself up to the service and glory of God.

In what I have called the active method, the Christian makes no such withdrawal of himself from social life. He participates in the ordinary activities of the world, and aims to serve God likewise. And here, again, in this sphere of active service are we compelled to make a distinction between those who give the living sacrifice of the Christian a limited, and those who give it a comprehensive, interpretation. There are two differing types of religion affirmed and set forth by professing Christians in the sphere of active service.

The one covers only a part of life, its relations and activities. The other covers the whole. According to the former, the sphere of religion is sharply defined and set apart from what is merely secular. Whatever has immediate and visible connection with the outward institutions of religion is regarded as religious. Whatever has not, is looked upon as merely secular. According to this idea a man is religious, and fulfils the requisite conditions of the Christian Sacrifice, when he is mindful of specific offices of devotion, and gives himself to the support and furtherance of what are called religious institutions. If he is punctual in the rites and ordinances, and supports the cherished schemes of his sect, he thinks he fulfils the acceptable service. This type of religion produces, as its quite common fruit, a character not entirely reliable in the affairs of ordinary life. For having monopolized sanctity within what is called the religious sphere, there is none left for the sphere merely secular. The man may pray in the church, and contribute quite regularly to missions abroad and at home, but in common social intercourse, and matters of trade and business, strict truth and justice may not always be sure of respect, if they are found to stand in the way of convenience or profit. In such a person there is an obvious lack of that beautiful wholeness and harmony properly termed integrity of character. Indeed, some have gone so far as to say that when religion of this stamp is seen in the market or exchange it is apt to make honest men suspicious.

For this type of religion I have but little respect—far less than for the contemplative. I consider both defective, and must go for the most satisfactory form of religion and for the full significance of the Christian's living sacrifice to that interpretation of it which is comprehensive, covering the whole of life in all its relations and activities.

It is through this interpretation only that we can discover and appreciate the full and far reaching meaning of the Lord Christ's sacrifice, which was not an offering of anything outward or apart from himself, but actually himself—his soul and all his powers to an active conformity to the will of God. And it is through this interpretation, too, that we reach the proper significance of the apostle Paul's entreaty when he beseeches Christians, "by the mercies of God, that they present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is their reasonable service." For the Christian soul must feel that all it has, and all that it is, is of God's mercy. And the Christian ought to feel and know, moreover, that a sanctity belongs to all that God has created and ordained. Christ has appeared, and removed the veil of separation which stood between man and his God. Now by him, as by the new and living way, have we access to the Father. Separate from God, and in fear, man once stood. But Christ came, and by the sacrifice of himself—in his life and his death—reconciled man to God, and sowed the seed of love which was to germinate and abound to the perfect casting out of fear. Christ shows us the

Father. He shows us the Father waiting and merciful—waiting for the offering we bring, and merciful in all his regards.

The offering which constitutes the proper Christian Sacrifice must be complete. As I have already said, all that we have, and all that we are, is God's—every outward possession, every inward faculty. All that we see is God's—all that we see in the heaven above and in the earth beneath. There is a sanctity all around us, and connected with our personal being. We can no longer rule off any part, and mark it common and unclean. Let our church here be sacred, and it must be so if we are faithful to the holy purpose of its erection. For these walls have been raised to shelter us while we meet to meditate on things divine, and lift up our common prayers to God. And to this purpose let this house now and henceforth stand dedicated. Raised, as it partly is, on the foundations of a former structure built for the same purpose, let this our second temple be dedicated, as the first was, "to religion and its uses—to the worship and glory of the one living and true God. To Christianity and its influences we dedicate it—to the exposition and enforcement of that Gospel which is the rule of life and charter of salvation. To the well-being of man we dedicate it—in his preparation of the duties of this life and the enjoyment of the life to come. To truth and love and peace we dedicate it, and invite them to dwell within its walls as the guardians of its sanctity. To holy prayer we dedicate it; to religious instruction

we dedicate it; to sacred song we dedicate it.”* But while we thus set it apart as a holy place and place of prayer, let not the shop and the counting-house, the market and the exchange, be places unsanctified as if God looked for no offering, or sought no service there. Rather let our service here still remind us that wherever a Christian man moves there does God demand the living Christian Sacrifice.

O, the height and the depth, the length and the breadth of this Christian obligation! How it follows a man every step he takes, reminding him whose he is, and what is the proper purpose of his life. Does he plough the field or fell the tree? Behold it is divine work—let him look to it that his muscles are faithful in their offering. Does he go to the couch of disease with his healing skill, or into a court of justice to plead a client’s cause? Behold here, too, the work is divine—let the conscience be awake, and the service rendered as unto God. Does he stand in mart or store amid the din of buying and selling? Behold here, again, is a place sanctified by the divine presence—let nothing fraudulent or unjust be permitted to enter—let every act of trade be an offering of conscience to the Lord. The spirit in which our work is rendered gives it its character in the sight of the Highest. This, as George Herbert writes, may

“Make drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room as for God’s laws
Makes that, and th’ action fine.”

* From Dr. Gannett’s Sermon at Dedication of Montreal Unitarian Church, 11th May, 1845.

This, my friends, is the call of the Gospel—the demand of Christianity. Nothing short of this can fulfil the living sacrifice there required. We must regard life's work as God's work, and whatever we cannot harmonize with its truth, justice, holiness, and love—that we must shun and put far away. We must decline act or part therein, else we divide the service of our hearts and vitiate the sacrifice of our lives. I need not speak here of the more obvious demands of Christian love upon us to help the helpless and the weak—to befriend the friendless and the erring. For all this will be seen, and more too—yea, far more than I have indicated—when the soul comes to submit itself meekly to God, and accept his will as the joyful law of its life. When self is crucified within, and all the poor and transient vanities which cluster around it are cast out, then will the holy spirit enter to put the seal upon our sacrifice, and confirm us as co-workers with God and all godlike spirits in the universe. Then shall we feel ourselves free of the limitations of time and place, members of the church universal, citizens of the kingdom which is eternal. Then, as we render our worship, shall we be “built up a spiritual house,” as the apostle saith,—“a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

SERMON XIV.

THE WOMEN AT THE CROSS.

“Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.”—*John* xix. 25.

THAT was a marked hour, in which Jesus was crucified. The passions of men raged furiously, and wrought the death of the “holy one and the just,” whom God had anointed and sent. But though the body yielded to the cruelty of his enemies, the spirit of Jesus remained unbroken and unsubdued. He showed himself the true Son of God to the last, and never more emphatically did he display the divinity of his character than when he hung in mortal agony on the cross. It was there he gained the grandest triumph over all his foes. While they in their wildness smote him to the death, he forgave them, and prayed to the Father on their behalf. Herein the victory of Jesus was complete. In love he came. In love he conquered.

The hour in which Jesus was crucified was an hour always to be noted and remembered. More than eight-

een hundred years have passed away since the cross was raised on Calvary, and still it stands before the eyes of men as if it were only an event of yesterday. The death of Jesus was the close of the most wonderful life ever lived on earth. And it was the preliminary of another event—I mean his resurrection—an event from which a new and lively hope dawned upon the world.

How strange it must have seemed to his followers when he was actually fastened to the cross! They had but dim apprehensions of his true character. They looked in hope for the Messiah, but they had been accustomed to look for one of princely pretensions. It would have accorded with their expectations if he had come with all the outward circumstances of a temporal deliverer. The far superior importance and glory of a spiritual deliverance they did not understand. The mighty works he performed awed and impressed them, and attracted them to hear “the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.” As they listened to these words, no doubt they received other and more excellent impressions than those of mere wonder—spiritual impressions, calculated to quicken the understanding, enlarge the heart, and exalt the character. But these were not sufficiently powerful to overcome the ancient and long cherished expectations of the nation. The old leaven which had been transmitted from father to son, through so many generations, was not easily expelled. When they saw him display his wonderful power, they would have placed him on the throne of David, and made him a king. But he escaped out of their hands.

They did not discern that he was already a greater king than David. The common people heard him gladly, for he mixed freely with them, and won their favor by his blessed words of truth and consolation. But those in power—the Pharisees and priests—sought to destroy him. They were jealous of his influence and dreaded it, for in its increase they saw, foreshadowed, the downfall of their own. And so they plotted and conspired against him. They hurried him from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod again to Pilate, whom they compelled to pass sentence by the infuriated cry of “Crucify him! crucify him!” Then was the fidelity of his friends tested. He was now in the hands of power. The priests and Pharisees had him. The Roman soldiers were their instruments. These were there—willing and reckless tools to perform any deed of blood. Jesus was no more to them than the malefactors whom they suspended at either side of him. And yet he was more, for they had heard that he pretended to be a king, and so in rude mockery they crowned him, and robed him. This was their coarse sport. And for his garment without seam they cast lots. This was their last perquisite. Ah me, how blindly do men work betimes! Little did those coarse and cruel men think that in plaiting that crown of thorns they were making a crown destined to command a higher reverence from the world than that of the proudest Cæsar. And the cross shines with more glory now than high-priest’s chair or Roman judgment seat. But where, in this trying hour, are his disciples—those who followed him

while he wrought his miracles and proclaimed his kingdom? One of them in his strong, rash confidence said, though all should deny and forsake him, he never would. Where is he now? He is gone where the rest are gone. All have fled through fear. They had trusted that it was he who should have redeemed Israel. But now that he was in the hands of his bitter and powerful enemies—now that he was actually on the cross—their trust fails them, and they flee. Triumphant malice and gratified revenge surround the cross. The rude tumultuous utterances of mockery and reproach fall upon the ear of the godlike sufferer. Oh, the unutterable desolation of such an hour to a soul not inwardly fortified. But Jesus was never alone. The Father was always with him to strengthen and sustain. The scene was indeed dark to his dying eyes, yet not wholly dark. For as the groups of vindictive and passionate men lingered or flitted before him, his eye rested on a little knot of persons whose every look showed that their sympathies were very different from those of the crucifiers. Three women were there, and a young man. Sorrow filled their hearts, and was visible on their faces. Their strong affection yearned towards the sufferer. It was seen by him, and recognized.

Even if the Evangelist had failed to give us the names of that little group, we should scarcely be at a loss to know who one of the women, at least, was, so long as we knew that Jesus had a mother living. It was she—his mother—who stood beside his cross, and her sister,

and Mary Magdalene. These were the three women—three Marys. The young man was the disciple whom Jesus loved—John. All the friends and followers of Jesus had fled except these. And here they were—these sorrowing women—fearless beside the cross, in the midst of a rude mob and brutal soldiery. How grand the fidelity of a true affection! The time had now come when the prediction of the good old Simeon was to have its fulfilment. The sword was now to pierce the heart of the mother through. The Son was suspended before her in agony. But she shrunk not from the trial. Impelled by a mother's love, she stood by the cross. No selfish fear could quench that love. And Mary Magdalene, she too, was there—drawn by the warm feeling of gratitude. The other Mary was the mother's sister, and had known the Lord from his earliest infancy. With the tender interest of so near a relative, she had watched his "increase in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." No doubt, as the mother pondered those wonderful things in her heart, which she had heard concerning her child, her sister sympathized with her in her musings, and both looked upon him with hushed and growing hope. But the power of Jesus' character won them all to a higher love than that of mere natural affection. This love had all the strength and warmth of a pure natural affection; but it had, besides, a serene trust, which took away the bitterness of despair. They had imbibed a portion of the spirit of Jesus. Pervaded by his love, they were linked to him by a heavenly tie, which separated them from all fear.

The men fled, but the women remained ; because their love was purer. An ambitious hope had mingled with the attachment of the former, and when Jesus was actually crucified, this hope was blasted. They had marvelled at his works, they had hung upon his words, and were, no doubt, strongly attached to him. But still the vision of a temporal kingdom floated before their imagination, and helped their adhesion to his cause. And when this vision was effectually dispelled, their adhesion was shaken. No such ambitious expectation lingered in the breasts of the women. They loved Jesus for what he was in himself, and whether among friends or enemies, at ease or in agony, he was still the same to them, and loved with the same love. Nay, more, among enemies and in agony, their love was quickened and stimulated to greater intensity and activity. Hence, they came and stood beside the cross. They were there, like forms of light on the ground of a dark, dark picture.

And the eye of the suffering son met the eye of the sorrowing mother and her sympathising friends. It was something to have such a son to look upon. It was something to be looked upon by such an one. Calm and resigned, in the strength of a godlike love, he hung there. In the midst of his agony, and with the recollection of all the previous injustice and barbarity of his trial and cross-bearing, yet fresh before his mind, he prayed for the pardon of his persecutors and crucifiers. He saw it was through ignorance they did it. "Father, forgive them," he said, "for they know

not what they do." This prayer will stand throughout all time a perpetual monument of the divine character of the Savior's mind. He died to benefit those who killed him. The strength of love that, under such circumstances, could utter such a prayer, evinced an intimate and abiding communion with God. Herein lay the glory and the strength of Jesus, in his intimate union with the Father. He was one with him. Hence no earthly power could disturb him. Amid all the tumult of human passions by which he was surrounded, he looked calmly and with confidence to Heaven. He came from the Father, he went to the Father, and the glory of God shone in his face. The compassion of his nature abounded for the blindness and bigotry of his crucifiers, and so he forgave the enormous wrong, and interceded with the Father to forgive also. This was his prayer upon the cross. But he spoke the word of promise too. "This day," said he, "thou shalt be with me in Paradise." This promise was spoken to one of the unhappy men who was expiring beside him. In that man he saw the indication of a right spirit reviving, and he at once gave the sinner hope. In the dying Jesus we have still the same character which we witnessed in the living Jesus. We perceive the same absorbing desire to do good. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" was the language of his early years. It might have been the language of his latest hours also. "My meat and my drink is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work, was the

language of the days of his most active life. The same might have been the language of his dying lips, when pinioned on the cross. This was not all, however. He had prayed for his murderers. This was the first expression which broke from his lips in the agony of the cross. He had uttered a gracious promise to the dying malefactor at his side. This was the second expression which came from him. But there was yet another group, distinct from the other two, and it was to this that the third utterance of the expiring Jesus was directed. He now spoke to his mother and the loved disciple. Filial affection now gained an utterance. His mother, we have every reason to believe, was already a widow, and he felt that on his removal, her home would indeed be desolate. The love of the mother had a response worthy of it in the love of the son. With all the grandeur of his mission before him, and the glory of his exaltation full in view, like a true son he still remembered his mother. Many an anxious hour had she watched over his childhood. Every advancing year of his life had she marked with tender and increasing interest. And now, with full and bursting heart, she stands beside his cross. Is this, then, after all, to be the close of her cherished hopes and anticipations? It is even so, O Mary! mother of the blessed one—it is even so. Thy Son hangs in apparent ignominy, but in real glory. The strength of the spirit triumphs over the weakness of the flesh, so that in his very agony he shows himself the Son of God. And thou, O Mary, mother!—as thou

standest there with thy meek and sorrowful face—the embodiment of a pure living affection, thou art more lovely and more glorious than regal diadem, or queenly robe could make thee.

“ Poets oft have sung thy story,
Painters decked thy brow with glory,
Priests thy name have deified.
But no worship, song or glory,
Touches like that simple story—
Mary stood the cross beside.”

She stood there, and out of the fulness of her living love gazed upon the sufferer. And she had her recompense. She was met with an eye of sympathy and tenderness. Jesus would provide for the future earthly comfort of his mother, and while he desired her to confide in the beloved disciple, he also commended her to that disciple's care and keeping. The utterances were brief, but full of the tenderest meaning. They were brief, for he was dying as he spoke them. Hear the simple account of John himself. “ When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, woman, behold thy son ! Then saith he to the disciple, behold thy mother ! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.”

I have now directed attention to the suffering Christ upon the cross, and the sorrowing Mother as she stood beside it. Christian friends and brethren, by every tie of gratitude and love are we bound to him who hung there. He came in the spirit and power of God to de-

liver us from sin and its fearful consequences. Herein especially did God commend his love towards us—that while we were yet sinners he sent his Son for our spiritual deliverance, and redemption from the power of evil. Herein, especially, did the Son of God commend his love towards us, that while men were yet sinners he entered on the mission, and yielded himself even to the death in fulfilment of the Father's gracious will. Fellow Christians, as we contemplate Jesus in his life, and in his death, can we continue to do him disrespect, by neglect of his love and of his commandments? If we take his name as Christians, are we not bound to seek the divine life as set forth in his life, the great Exemplar? And can it be said that we are true to our Christian name, while we slight the most obvious Christian graces, and remain unforgiving in temper, frivolous in mind, absorbed by sensual or selfish pursuits, negligent of God's glory, careless of man's welfare, untrue to our best thoughts and clearest light, timid on behalf of truth, desiring popular favor or personal acquisition rather than simple integrity, seeking the approval of man rather than that of God? This is surely a searching question. Let us put it to ourselves in its various particulars, and by such means seek to find out our special weaknesses and sins.

Many and various are the lessons taught us by Jesus on the cross. There, emphatically, he taught us how to forgive. This, I regard, as a cardinal lesson. No personal injury is too great for forgiveness. This is a virtue most difficult of exercise. Some of our

strongest passions are arrayed against it. Wrongs are done us sometimes which wound us deeply in the tenderest part. And our very forgiveness may sometimes be misunderstood. If we overlook the wrong, our conduct may be set down as the mark of a dull and abject spirit, which fails to perceive the wrong. Still we ought to suffer to be misunderstood, rather than remain unforgiving. Here, however, let me make a distinction. It is one thing simply to forgive, and another thing to forgive and restore to confidence. Thus, if we find ourselves wronged or wounded by friend or enemy, we ought to forgive, as Jesus did—more especially if we can suppose that it was through ignorance or heedlessness the wrong was done. This we ought to do, independently of the state of mind of the person who did the injury. This we ought to do for our own sake, for if we cherish any harsh or vindictive feeling we injure ourselves more than any other person can injure us. But if the person forgiven show no sense of the wrong he has done—if he manifest no regret on account of it—then he cannot be regarded as worthy of confidence. We can have no thorough sympathy with a person in whom this proper spirit is wanting. But where this proper mind is shown, then, not only should our forgiveness be exercised, but the wrong blotted out of sight, and confidence restored. I hope our notice of this distinction will remove a difficulty, which some may feel. It will be observed that no moral impossibility is insisted on—no such moral impossibility as restoring any one to

confidence whom we really cannot confide in. Forgiveness, however, we insist on. We ought to forgive as Jesus did. We ought to forgive as we hope to be forgiven.

Many and various, I repeat—great and precious—are the lessons which Jesus on the cross teaches. But we cannot at present attempt to enlarge upon them. We must now be satisfied with the simple suggestion of our text. This relates to the suffering son, and the sorrowing mother and friends. In the latter, as they stood beside the cross, we see the triumph of love and fidelity over all selfishness and fear. Perhaps no scene could be imagined more repugnant to the feelings of those devoted women, and that gentle disciple, than the scene of the crucifixion. It was a scene of coarseness and cruelty—of barbarity and blood. It was one where the wildest passions reigned, and from which less courageous souls had fled through fear. But the mother and friends of Jesus braved all danger, resolved to be faithful to the last. Herein they gave a lesson to all disciples throughout all time. How well the apostle Paul learned it, and set it forth, is evident from his writings. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” is his question; “shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”—No. None of these things should. All these things ought to be readily encountered rather than swerve from our loyalty and love to him who lived for us and died for us. Says the same apostle in another place, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ.”

This was also worthy of the noble-minded and Christ-loving Paul. Popular opinion had put a ban upon the cross. Jew scorned it, and Greek laughed at it. To the one it was a stumbling-block, and to the other it was foolishness. But Paul would not blink it out of sight on this account. He might have succumbed to popular opinion and not put the cross so prominently forward. But this would have been disloyalty to the Lord, and to his cause. The cross was a fact—a truth, a central fact—a central truth, and therefore the apostle put it forward in the face of popular opinion. All such lessons are for us and for our benefit. Whenever and wherever scoff or sneer is uttered against Christ's name or Christ's cross, then and there will the true and loving soul stand closer to both; and, like the noble apostle of old, proclaim abiding fidelity. Every truth that Christ taught—every truth of his religion—is, so to speak, a part of himself, because part of his religion. "I am the truth," said he. In him religious truth was embodied and manifested in a visible life. Now if through fear of "peril or sword"—of private interest or popular opinion—we shrink from the truth which commends itself to our mind, heart, and conscience as the teaching of the blessed Jesus, are we not as disloyal to the Lord and to his cause as Peter was, when he denied him and fled, or as Paul would have been, had he failed to set forth the cross prominently in his teaching? The devoted women, the loving John, the faithful Paul—verily these are patterns of fidelity, most worthy of our admiration and imitation.

Another remark, and I have done. From the notice which Jesus took of his mother as he hung upon the cross, we may learn an important and affecting lesson. No mission could be grander than his,—none more comprehensive in its effects. He saw it in its magnitude, and brought all his powers into its service.—His mind never rested, his will never faltered, his love never wearied in the work of the world's deliverance and salvation. But this great and comprehensive work, while it engrossed his attention, did not disturb or banish thought of the closer and more intimate duties of filial and friendly affection. It was he who was to save the world, who was to shed blessings on the whole race of man, whose work was to be seen in its effects throughout all ages,—it was he who, from his place of agony, looked upon his mother and said, “behold thy son!” and upon his disciple, and said, “behold thy mother!” Let us look to the Lord here, seen as a son and a friend, and learn of him. Every lesson of his which we accept and apply, brings us nearer to the stature of the perfect manhood and to the blessedness of heaven. This rare blending of what was grandest and most comprehensive, with what was minute and most tenderly affecting, showed Jesus to be far removed from all ordinary persons and characters. Herein do we behold, in part, the glory of the divine Sonship radiating from the Man of Nazareth. Glory be to his name! Glory be to his work! Glory be to God in the highest, who anointed him with the Holy Spirit, and with power, to accomplish a work of such unspeakable love!

SERMON XV.

UNITY OF THE FATHER AND THE SON.

“I and my Father are one.”—*John x. 30.*

OUR Lord here affirms the unity subsisting between himself and his Father. The full and true recognition of this unity between God and Christ is essential to any adequate apprehension of Christianity. The nature of this unity is quite simple and intelligible, being of the spiritual kind, involving oneness in will, oneness in action, oneness in purpose. Had there been any disunion or want of harmony between the Father and the Son—any discord of will or contrariety of purpose—a Gospel of peace and reconciliation, as between man and God, would have been impossible—impossible, I mean, as the message of such a messenger—a messenger at discord with the sender of the message. But no such disunion or discord is ever intimated. The whole scope of the New Testament teaching goes to show that perfect unity of spirit and purpose subsisted between God and Christ.

We should have no difficulty in treating this matter of the spiritual unity between God and Christ, and its immediate bearing on the great purpose of man's deliverance from sin, and redemption to life eternal ;—if we had only to do with the Christianity of the New Testament, and with the developments of the Gospel in the first ages of the Church. But we cannot now approach this subject without noticing existing ecclesiastical doctrines. And these are so different in their statements from the statements of the New Testament, that their tendency is to perplex and confound simple believers, and deter many sincere minds from too close an investigation, lest the discrepancy between the one and the other should grow so clear to their apprehension as to make them uncomfortable in assenting to the current ecclesiastical doctrines. The mass of Christendom is disposed to inertness in such matters, and prefer the more easy way of taking doctrines on trust, to the less easy way of looking for truth in doctrine. Let it be stated on the authority of immemorial ecclesiastical tradition, that two and two make ten, and that to doubt this is to incur damnation, and that, moreover, the greater the contradiction to reason the more eminent the act of faith and the more signal the heavenly reward ; and adoring millions will accept the proposition, and rely upon it as essential to a saving faith. The more simple and intelligible proposition that two and two make four, and not ten, will have no charm for them. They have been told and taught that they will be damned if they thus yield to

the plausibilities of reason. Hence the constant conflict between the natural God-given reason of man and the traditional doctrines of the Church.

Yet there ought to be no such conflict. For all truth is of God, whether developed through the instrumentality of human reason or holy writ. Both these gifts are of his bestowal, and they involve no contradiction one with the other. If the proposition, that two and two make four, is arithmetically true, it must be held likewise to be true in theology; and no proposition at variance with it, though backed by all the authority of Church tradition, can be otherwise than false. If the proposition that two and two make ten, is arithmetically false, it must be held, likewise, to be false in theology, and no proposition affirming its truth, though backed by all the authority of Church tradition, can make it true. It may seem a simple thing to be assured of, and to feel assured of, *to wit*: that two and two make four. It may seem a simple thing to be so well assured of this, that no subtleties of speculative philosophy nor threatenings of ecclesiastical authority, can make us hesitate about it. Yet, simple as it may seem, we have in reality made a great step in theological enquiry when we find that we can rest without fear or doubting on just such simple first principles as this proposition involves.

In the first ages of the Church, the doctrine of the spiritual oneness of God and Christ was held in its simplicity. But as the preaching of the Gospel advanced in the world, it came in contact with the

speculative distinctions of the current philosophy. Then were its doctrines subjected to the action of the speculative intellect and cast into new forms of statement. These new forms of statement were embodied in creeds, and made the basis of ecclesiastical teaching. The most signal of these new developments is seen in the Arian controversy in the fourth century, which resulted in the new statement of the Nicene Creed. This controversy began at Alexandria, which was then the chief seat of the Platonic philosophy, and it was through contact with this philosophy, and the distinctions which it suggested, that the new statements of the Christian doctrine were made. The result of these new statements of doctrine, made in the fourth century, and the further controversies which grew out of them again, was to obscure the original scriptural doctrine of the spiritual unity of God and Christ, and overlay it with another doctrine of another kind of unity, involving equality of power and glory as between the Father and the Son. This is the kind of unity which is asserted as essential and fundamental to faith, by the traditional church creeds of Christendom. And here, standing on the distinct statement of holy writ, we join issue with the scholastic statements of the traditional creeds. I take the statement of the Westminster Confession, as being the most concise. It runs thus: "in the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost." And the statement of

the Westminster Catechism is to the same effect: the three persons are "equal in power and glory." Now, how does this kind of unity, involving the co-eternity and the co-equality in power and glory, of God and Christ, consist with what is taught in the New Testament? How does the creed statement of such an unity harmonize with what our Lord himself says of his unity with his Father? Does Christ's statement indicate a unity as between two or three co-equal and co-eternal sovereign persons? Or does it indicate such a unity of spirit and of purpose as subsists between a just and gracious sovereign and his faithful minister, between a just and loving father and a devoted and obedient son? Let any sober and candid mind judge and determine. "I and my Father are one," saith Christ. Now, mark the circumstances under which this declaration was made. He was addressing an audience of his own nation—the Jews. He had spoken his touching parable of the good shepherd, ending with an allusion to his own death and rising again. He would not have them believe, however, that his life was at the mere disposal of man, when it came to be taken away. Against this mistake he puts them on their guard, and intimates a divine purpose in what he was to undergo. Thus, he says, "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." (*John* x. 18.) Having said this he left them, and they discussed his sayings and disputed concern-

ing him. Some time afterward he was walking in one of the porches of the temple. And again "came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, how long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.—Then the Jews took up stones to stone him. Jesus answered them, many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of these works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, for a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him." (*John* x. 24–38.)

Observe the statements here made, and consider

them in the light of their occasion. Jesus was speaking to Jews. The Jews of that time, like the Jews of all times, were monotheistic—strictly so, holding the doctrine of one God in one person. So jealous were they of this doctrine that, when Jesus said, “I and my Father are one,” they instantly interrupted him and prepared to stone him. They thought, or pretended to think, that he had affirmed himself God in the same absolute sense in which his Father was God; and they were ready to stone him for what they regarded blasphemy. How does Jesus meet them here? Not by affirming co-equality in power or anything else. Not by stating that he was in some sense, either obvious or occult, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Not by setting forth any dual or triple personality in the one God of Israel. Yet, if this had been religious truth, he would most assuredly have affirmed it and set it forth. On the other hand, we find him reasoning with them out of their scriptures, reminding them that others have been called gods, without thought of equality with the Supreme God. He had already affirmed that the Father was “greater than all.” This covered the whole ground of conceivable being. And when he stated his oneness with the Father, he meant no such blasphemy as they supposed. He meant simply to say, and have them believe, that he was the “Son of God.”

Observe the statements of Jesus, I say, and consider them in the light of the occasion. The Jews, being strictly monotheistic, needed, above all things, to have

any dual, or triple, or compound personality—if such existed in God—stated; and if Christ's unity with the Father had been of a kind involving co-equality of power, it would have been set forth then and there. If he had been absolute God, equal with the Father, he would have said so, and stated his position in some such phrase as the church creeds use—"God the Son." Had Jesus held such doctrine as true, and essential to eternal salvation, as ecclesiastical traditions teach, most certainly he would have done so. But the whole drift of his explanation is against this doctrine. He uses no such phrase as "God the Son,"—there is no such phrase in all holy writ; but calls himself the "Son of God,"—a term involving a derived origin. He asserts no equality of power and glory; but affirms that his Father is greater than all, and that he did the works of his Father,—a statement involving here what he often expressly stated elsewhere, that his power was a derived power.

Nothing can be more explicit than Christ's disclaimer of original and underived power, "Verily, verily," he says, "the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do." (*John* v. 19.) And again, (v. 30) "I can, of mine own self, do nothing." And elsewhere, "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." (*John* xiv. 10.) And following the teaching of the master, thus taught the first apostles, as when Peter on the day of Pentecost preached Christ, saying, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you,

by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you." (*Acts* ii. 22.) And again, the apostle states, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy spirit and with power." (*Acts* x. 38.) This indicates the tenor of the original preaching of the Gospel, by Christ and his apostles. The unity between the Father and the Son is not a unity involving equality of power, but a unity involving a gradation of power, and where the power of the Son was derived from the Father.

The works of Christ were wrought, as he thus explicitly assures us, in virtue of a power derived from the Father. And no less explicitly does he assure us that the word of truth which he taught came likewise from his Father as the original source. "My doctrine," he says, "is not mine, but his that sent me." (*John* vii. 16.) "He that sent me is true, and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him." (*John* viii. 26.) "I do nothing of myself, but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." (*v.* 28.) "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." (*John* xiv. 24.) And so on throughout his teaching. "My meat is to do the will of him that, sent me and to finish his work." (*John* iv. 34.) "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (*John* vi. 38.) In this unhesitating and explicit manner did he teach his strictly delegated capacity, as a messenger sent by God his Father. And thus, also, does he show that the unity which subsisted between himself and God was a

pure spiritual unity ; involving, not equality of power and glory and eternity, but perfect oneness of will and purpose—such perfect harmony of will as comes from a devoted filial obedience from a loving son toward a loving father.

The simple and unembarrassed doctrine of the New Testament concerning Christ is that he is the Son of God—the Son of that one supreme God whom he styles Father, and whom he addressed in prayer, in express terms, as “the Only True God.” As his disciples, we are bound to accept his teaching concerning his Father and himself, and the relations which subsist between them, rather than the more recent statements of doctrine set down in the traditional creeds of Christendom. For in this matter it is really a question between scripture and tradition. The traditional term, “God the Son” is of scholastic origin—an invention of the speculative intellect to denote an existence in itself eternal and underived. Some such term became necessary for the use of the Church when, after three or four centuries of teaching, it found itself so imbued with the subtleties and suggestions of the fashionable philosophy of the time, that the scripture term, “Son of God,” no longer fitly and fully described its faith. For this term denotes at once a derived origin. When the leaders of thought in Christendom, through metaphysical speculation on the nature of the Deity, had wrought a change in the way of conceiving of God, then were new terms and statements needed. The old scriptural forms of words no longer suited the new

exigencies of the Church. The scriptural term, "Son of God," had to be inverted; and to meet the demands of the new views, the term, "God the Son," was written in the church creeds. And there it stands to this day. The scripture doctrine having been inverted through philosophical speculation concerning God, the form of the statement had to be inverted likewise.

The New Testament, throughout, shows us a clearly recognised distinction, on the part of all its writers, as between the Father and the Son—a recognised distinction in the obvious sense of the terms, whereby the term "Father" denotes priority, and the term "Son" derivation and subordination. The New Testament was written by several persons at various times, in various places, and under various circumstances, but their general scope is clear on this point. If occasional expressions should be observed, which are seemingly at variance with it, a very little calm and candid reflection will, I think, remove the difficulty. The difficulty will vanish, I think, when we reach a true apprehension of the spiritual unity which subsisted between the Father and the Son, while the Son walked the earth as the Christ or anointed Messenger of God. The spirit of the Father pervaded the Son, so that a perfect oneness of will and purpose still moved them. Thus was the one said to be in the other—the Son being the visible image and representative, to men, of the invisible Father whom no human eye could see.—To this end, indeed, was he ordained and sent, that he might show forth, visibly, the Father, and the Father's

love to win the sinning children of men back from their evil courses, and lead them to find their highest joy in goodness and in God. They were the prodigals, God was the Father, and Christ was sent to call them home by moving them to penitence through the power of love. "God was in Christ," *i. e.* manifested in him, "reconciling the world unto himself." Christ was therefore a very "Immanuel," a living token of "God with us."—There is but one supreme God, in the absolute sense,—one God in one person—known to all as the Father, as Christ and all prophets and apostles teach; but the term God is sometimes applied in holy writ to other persons. Thus, Moses is said to have been made a God to Pharaoh.—"The Lord said unto Moses, see I have made thee a God to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet." (*Ex.* vii. 1.)—More such examples might be cited, but this will be enough to show what I mean. Our Lord himself refers to such expressions in his explanations to his Jewish hearers, as already noticed in this discourse. If the term God should be applied to Jesus himself, then, we see from his own way of treating the subject, in what sense it should be taken. We see that it should be taken in its subordinate, not in its supreme and absolute sense. If we do not consciously or unconsciously put ourselves in the way of being misled through the misleading influence of the traditional creeds, the New Testament will keep us right in this matter. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, we find the Son styled God, as in the common reading of the eighth verse

of first chapter: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." But, in the next verse we are reminded of the one God, absolute and supreme, to whom the Son himself owed homage, and from whom he derived his recompense and his glory: "God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

The scriptural doctrine concerning Christ, I say again, is, that he is the "Son of God,"—in spiritual unity with his Father—one with him in will and purpose, as a loving and obedient Son, finding his meat and drink in doing his Father's will—finding the joy and delight of his spirit in carrying out his Father's work. He is the "Son of God" in a high and peculiar sense, as the whole scope of holy writ showeth. He is the Son of God in a sense more exalted than Adam or Solomon, or any other person to whom the term "Son of God" is applied in scripture. He has been styled the only begotten—the well-beloved—full of grace and truth. To him the spirit was given without measure. As none knoweth the Son properly but the Father, so none knoweth the Father properly but the Son. So close and intimate was and is the spiritual sympathy and relation subsisting between them.

I have said that the whole drift of the New Testament teaching goes to show that in this spiritual unity, as between the Father and the Son—in this oneness of will and purpose which subsisted between them—there is subordination of the Son to the Father everywhere involved, either expressly or by implication. Citations in proof of this would be endless. The general im-

pression to this effect left on every reader, is too strong and constant to be unnoticed or resisted. Had the New Testament been permitted to remain as sole teacher of Christian doctrine to Christendom, Christendom would not now be perplexed by any doctrine of a threefold distribution of God, or of a unity in equality of power and glory, as between Christ and his Father. This is the work and result of the scholastic statements of the traditional creeds. So plain, so forcible, so irresistible, indeed, is the impression produced by Christ's own teaching and life, as to his own derived nature and power, and his delegated character; that the scholastic creed statement to the contrary, could not stand an hour, if there had not been a scholastic fallacy invented to support it. I refer to the theory of the double nature. This was a device of scholastic theologians to meet the insuperable difficulties which the words and acts of the Lord Christ himself placed in the way of their dogma of equality in unity. For since he prayed to the Father and called him "the only true God;"—since he said he was sent by the Father,—that his power came from his Father,—that his Father was greater than he,—that his Father was greater than all;—since he openly referred all that was great, and gracious, and excellent in his mission to his Father, as the original source;—since he openly subordinated his own will to the will of the Father, and gloried therein;—since, from the agony of the Cross, he commended his spirit into his Father's hands, and after his resurrection spoke to his disciples of his

ascending to his Father and their Father, his God and their God ;—since, I say, he thus spake and did, the true character of his relation to his Father was made too clear to be overcome or gainsaid by any dogmatic statement, however positive in itself, or extensively sustained by ecclesiastical authority. Hence the scholastic device of a twofold nature, or two natures rather, in Christ himself. But this device involves a fallacy so transparent that it is not likely to mislead any but those who are ready to be misled through previous acceptance of the ecclesiastical dogma, by means of traditional creed teaching. And having thus accepted it, prior to evidence, they only look for something to help them to hold it to the end. In this case, any device will do. But when a truth-seeking mind, resolute in its desire to know the truth, comes to look ecclesiastical traditions full in the face, and fairly question the grounds and reasons thereof, when such a mind, with such a purpose, comes to this device, he discovers its fallacy in an instant. Here is the case briefly stated, as I stated and printed it many years ago. Two scriptural phrases or classes of phrases are produced, in one of which it is said Christ's supreme Deity is taught, and in the other his subordinate nature. Both, it is urged, must be admitted in the sense attached to them, and from this it is urged that Christ had two natures. The theory thus constructed is then employed to defend the doctrine of Christ's supremacy against the overwhelming evidence of scripture, teaching his subordination, which can be arrayed against it. Now we ask the careful reader to mark the fallacy. Is it

not plain that, in the first instance, in constructing the theory of the two natures, the real point in controversy (Christ's supreme and absolute Deity) is gratuitously assumed, or taken for granted, without proof. And then the theory, *thus fallaciously constructed*, is employed to protect the very doctrine *which was gratuitously assumed for the purpose of constructing it*. Is not the fallacy obvious? We ask the reader to consider this point carefully. Christ's supreme Deity must be satisfactorily proved *before* the doctrine of the two natures can be established. And this just brings us back to the primary question.

We say, then, that it is impossible to construct the theory of the two natures in Christ without resorting to the fallacy of "begging the question," or assuming that to be true, which is the very point in dispute.

But even this assumption of two natures in our Lord cannot be made to cover all the circumstances of the case, and protect the theory of the co-equality of the Father and the Son from the difficulties which press upon it from the plain statements of scripture. Those statements not only deny the supremacy of the Son, but they affirm the sole supremacy of the Father. In thus making express affirmation of the supreme Deity of the *Father only*, they obviously exclude the supreme Deity of the Son in any and every sense. Let us advert to what Christ says of the time of his coming to judgment:—"Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my *Father only*." (*Mat.* xxiv. 36.) In the parallel passage in Mark (xiii. 32.) it is thus written:—"Of that day and that

hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels who are in heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father." In these passages it is evident that our Savior disavows knowledge of the event referred to, in every sense, and assigns that knowledge to the Father *exclusively*. Here, then, is a difficulty which cannot be met even by the assumption of the two natures.

It is to be observed that the traditional doctrine concerning God, which is embodied in the church creeds, is dramatic in its form of statement. The cast is threefold. "In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons," says the creed. Each of the three persons has his own fixed order in the cast, and has a certain part peculiar to himself to fulfil. That such a mode of statement may have had its uses, I do not deny. It may have had its uses in imparting to the popular mind a more vivid apprehension of the divine transactions in regard to man. The great mistake has been made in allowing the statement to crystallize in a creed, and thus perpetuate a form of words, which can no longer safely lead, but rather mislead. For understood in the obvious sense, which the words thereof convey to us in this age of the world, they mar the strict and simple unity of God, which we everywhere see presented in holy scripture. And in the theology connected therewith, in its relation to man, we find a contradiction of the scripture doctrine of unity of mind and will as between the Father and the Son in this matter. According to that theology, the Father has a certain will and purpose in regard to

man, which he is induced to forego, through the intervention of another and differing will and purpose, which moves the Son. The Father, hating sin, has his hand raised in divine wrath to strike down the sinner. The Son, full of love toward the sinner, intervenes, and through his intervention saves him from the awful consequences of the Father's wrath. Such representations as these show a very distorted conception of the relation of the Father and the Son, and of the kind of unity which subsists between them. Oh, friends and brethren, let us not libel our heavenly Father by saying, or suspecting, that his love toward man was ever less than Christ's love to man. Nor ever let us libel Christ our Savior, by saying or suspecting that hatred of sin, and indignation against wilful sinners, was not felt by him as well as by his Father. No, on these points, the Father and the Son were, and are always, one. There was no love toward man in the Son, that was not in the Father,—no hatred of sin in the Father, that was not in the Son. In their way of regarding sin and sinners, Christ and his Father were and are one.

Once more, in closing, I repeat the main position of this discourse, *viz* :—that the scripture doctrine concerning Christ is, that he is the Son of God, and one with his Father in spirit, will and purpose. Acting in this perfect union with the Father, he came as his messenger, bearing God's message of grace to men. He was thus God's Messiah, or Christ, or Anointed,—showing forth the divine character and will, as a true son, in loving and dutiful sympathy with his father,

will show forth his father's character by a living manifestation. Of such a spiritual kind is the unity of the Father and the Son, as set forth in the New Testament. The other doctrine which I have been compelled to notice, the traditional doctrine of unity involving equality, is, as I have said, inconsistent with the general tenor of scripture. And I may add here that it is plainly refuted by the Savior's use of the term "one" elsewhere.

Read his prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel, and we see this at once: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are... Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

Here let us rest in our Lord's own statement and explanation. And above all let us henceforth so strive in his spirit, by watching, by prayer, and by the devout fidelity of our lives to him, our great leader, that we may share the joy foreshadowed in that last sublime and affecting petition, "Father I pray that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

SERMON XVI.

CHRISTIAN GROWTH THROUGH TRUTH AND LOVE.

“Speaking the truth in love, we may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.”—*Eph. iv. 15.*

THE words which I have just cited as our text, invite us to consider the union of truthfulness and love as a means of Christian growth and progress. The first term—translated to speak truth—signifies also to act truly, to be sincere. The apostolic teaching is, that it is by combining truthfulness and sincerity with love, that we are to grow up and advance into the perfect manhood, “unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

Surely, friends, we must all desire this growth. If we have no such desire it betokens a sad moral condition—a condition of religious indifference, equivalent to a practical denial of Christ. Few persons, I think, would confess to the want of such a desire. I am sure that no one who now hears me would say “I have no

desire to become better, no desire to advance in excellence, and grow in the likeness to Christ. If I give any respect to religious institutions, it is because custom sanctions them. But as for making any actual and vital advancement in the Christian character, I do not care for it, nor do I give it any special thought." No one would deliberately say this. Yet, I would ask, is it assuming too much to affirm that it might be said by many, who at first would recoil from the thought that it might be applied to themselves? For the practice of worship often degenerates into mere habit and formality, and the supreme end of all Christian worship and instruction has been too commonly lost sight of. A gospel of conformity to common custom has, with too many, taken the place of the truthful, elevating, heavenly Gospel of Christ.

But no man or woman was ever sanctified or saved by any such gospel of conformity and convenience. By such a gospel no man or woman ever had heart renewed, or character raised into the likeness of Christ. Look at those who follow a gospel of convenience—look at them wherever they are, and we see them in bondage to surrounding circumstances, their chief aim in life seeming to be to make as decent a compromise as possible with these. They do not recognise their bondage, nor feel its shackles. They are content in their position, and are disposed, perhaps, to regard as mere theorists all who assert the sanctity of truth and of conscientious conviction. And it is surely a sad comment on any gospel of conformity or conven-

ience, that its effect on any mind should be so to obscure its discernment, and blunt the conscience, that it fails to perceive the degradation and wrong of such a bondage to circumstances. Those who worship according to a gospel of conformity, may be amiable persons, or simply timid, coerced by sectarian pressure, which gives no respect to conscience in its eagerness to augment the numbers of its sect. The drift of such proceeding is to bring conscience into disrespect, to laugh its considerations away, as if truth and duty and God and Christ were not matters of great and sacred and commanding import.

The highest aim of the Christian disciple ought to be to grow holy and excellent after the manner of the Master. All worship or service which has not this aim in view is false in purpose and valueless. We may worship with vast multitudes in spacious and splendid temples, we may listen to the tongue whose speech pleases us, or to the music which we admire for its novelty or love for its familiarity ; but if we are not quickened and moved thereby to a higher and diviner life, to a Christian growth and progress, it is all vain and worse than vain. It is indeed. The Lord Jesus Christ came that he might win us to himself, and redeem us into God by the purity of his law and the power of his love. But to the end that we may be thus won and redeemed, set free from the power of evil by the greater power of the divine life and love which he presents, we must give all respect to his word of truth and life of love. Of the great body of the redeemed, of

those delivered from the power of evil, *i.e.*, of his Church, he is the appointed head. And to "grow up into him in all things"—into his moral image and likeness, is the demand which lies against every one of us. Such demand does but open the door of high and gracious privilege. It is strict in its leading, but it brings us into the light of a large place. It brings us into the "household of God." It lifts us into consciousness of our divine filiation. We come to feel thereby that we, too, are "sons of God."

Here the great question occurs to us: how shall we thus grow? how shall we best advance toward a living likeness to Christ the Lord? To this question, the apostle in the text furnishes an answer. The union of truthfulness and sincerity, with the charity of the Gospel, through this, writes the apostle Paul, may we grow up into Christ in all things.

Accepting and using the figure of the apostle, we shall refer to the Christian character as a growth or development. The outward and material world furnishes abundant illustration for our present purpose. Plants and trees grow and expand under the genial and refreshing influences of the sun as it shines, and the rain as it falls. Gradually we witness their advance to maturity, and plainly do we see their success or their failure. Plants are of different character, and the cultivation which would suit one would not suit another. One requires a moist soil, and another a soil that is dry. One thrives best on an eastern exposure, and another on a southern. If you overlook or disre-

gard these characteristics your cultivation will be a failure. Instead of having plants growing and ripening and bringing forth fruit, you will have sickly, stunted growths, giving no substantial or satisfactory results.

Now, in like manner, the soul grows, and the character expands under the moral and spiritual influences which are brought to bear upon them through the agencies and instrumentalities of God's providence. Gradually, in their case also, do we witness their advance to maturity, and plainly enough at times do we see their success or their failure. The human mind, likewise, has a variety of characteristics. All minds are not cast in the same mould, any more than all human faces. A very little observation makes this plain enough. Now this variety of mental characteristics requires also a diversity of culture, to the end that a healthy growth and development may be secured, and worthy fruit brought forth. One mind requires to be brought under one set of influences, and another under influences of a different description. If we overlook these tendencies, and disregard these requirements, instead of having a well-developed character growing in the likeness of Christ and bringing forth all the fruit it is capable of producing, we shall have mere sickly or stunted growths of character, having no proper strength, giving no proper satisfaction, timid, time-serving, vain or frivolous.

The sum of the matter is this; and I ask you to remember it. As in the natural and material world

plants are diverse in their characteristics and require a certain diversity in their mode of treatment and cultivation, in order to bring their growth to a proper maturity, so in the mental and moral world, men's minds are diverse in their characteristics, requiring also a certain diversity in their mode of training and culture in order to bring their development to a satisfactory and saving result. Nor in either case does this diversity come by chance. In both cases it comes in the settled line of the divine order.

Still adhering to our illustration: suppose I have two or more plants or trees—a pine, let us say, a willow, and a peach. Evidently I should act very unwisely if I were to plant these three trees together in the same soil and subject to the same exposure. The coolness and damp which would fructify the willow, and cause it to shoot forth its lithe saplings, would damage the peach, and destroy all chance of its adequate fruit-bearing. The warmth which brings forth the buds upon the peach-tree and ripens its mellow fruit, would speedily scorch the willow and cause it to wither and decay. Upon the thinner soil and more elevated exposure of the mountain side, where the pine is called upon to wrestle with the storm, it stretches forth its roots and strengthens its branches. But while this situation strengthens the pine it would only weaken the others. Yet it will be observed that they are all nourished and matured through the agency of the same sun, the same earth, the same atmosphere, but under different modifications.

Now, in like manner, it is the same God and the same Gospel which is to enlighten and redeem every human soul. But there are various ways of presenting this Gospel so that every man and woman in their diversities of mental endowment may profit by that which is fitted for them, and grow up under it. In one place it is passionately presented—strong appeals are made to the feelings. In this way many minds are impressed, and helped onward and upward. In another place it is presented in a calmer manner—the reason is addressed more than the feelings, and the slumbering conscience called upon to awake and be vigilant. In this way many other minds are interested, and brought into more thoughtful mood and more earnest seeking after the divine life. In one place a given doctrine is taken as the basis of all instruction and exhortation. This doctrine being admitted, the instruction comes with fitness and advantage, and aids the growth of the Christian character. In another place some other doctrine is taken as the basis from which instruction and exhortation are given. And this doctrine, again, harmonising with the views of another class of minds, the instruction springing from it is fit and beneficial—helpful to the Christian growth. Thus it comes that Methodists, Calvinists, Unitarians, and others, have different places of worship and instruction, according to their different views and beliefs. And the teaching of the Gospel, as presented in either of these places, becomes beneficial to the soul in proportion as it harmonises with the convictions of the minds

that attend, and as it is adapted to their special characteristics.

We cannot yet afford to part with our illustration, and so I will say that as I could not consent to plant my peach-tree side by side with my neighbor's willow in the damp bottom land, nor with my other neighbor's pine on the mountain side, neither can I submit my soul to the worship and teaching of his church merely because it is his. The bottom land may suit his willow, the mountain side may suit his pine, but neither of them will suit my peach. His church may suit him with his mental convictions and characteristics, his soul may be made to grow in it, but it will not suit me with my different convictions and characteristics. Its want of adaptation to me would only impoverish my soul, and keep it poor and miserable and weak and blind. If I desire my peach-tree to flourish and bear fruit, I must seek a soil and situation which are suitable for it. And no one ought to blame me for so doing. If I desire mind and heart improved—if I desire to grow in the knowledge and likeness of Christ, I must seek the church or place, which by its doctrine and spirit is best suited to me, and through which I may be most effectually aided towards this greatest of all ends. And, surely, no one ought to blame me for so doing. Nay, ought not all to commend me for giving most earnest heed to this matter of supreme concern?

Just as in the case of the three trees, each grows best in the soil and situation adapted to it, so with three

minds—one may grow under Methodism, another Calvinism, a third under Unitarianism: Methodism gives more prominence to emotion or feeling, Calvinism gives more prominence to defined dogmas, Unitarianism gives more prominence to the spirit and tenor of the life. The mind that is convinced of the doctrines of Calvinism would be out of place worshipping habitually with Unitarians. It would find the instruction starting from a basis in which it had little confidence. For all Unitarian teaching starts from the foundation of God's simple unity, and the moral ability of man, sinful though he be. The mind, on the other hand, that has Unitarian convictions would be equally out of place in worshipping habitually with Calvinists, for all proper Calvinistic teaching starts from a belief in the tri-personality of God, and the innate, hereditary depravity of human nature. All appeals and exhortations, therefore, addressed to a mind that has not these convictions, must be deprived of their best effect and fall comparatively useless. Such a mind can no more grow to a proper Christian growth under such circumstances, than a peach-tree could grow properly along with the willow where it flourishes in the damp bottom.

I hope I have made these points sufficiently plain. If so, you will at once perceive the profound rational significance of the apostle's doctrine in the text, and the absolute necessity of truthfulness and sincerity to a growth in the Christian life. Elsewhere the same apostle says that "whatsoever is not of faith (*i.e.*, of

conviction) is sin." Hence may we see that outward conformity, through custom or complaisance, to what we do not inwardly believe, is not a thing to be lightly esteemed, as some seem to consider it. Diversity of belief the apostle recognises, but he insists on truthfulness and sincerity. Whatsoever outward or public profession may be made, not harmonizing with the inward conviction, is simply hypocritical, actually wrong and sinful. A conscience void of offence toward God and men is to be preserved at all hazards. We are to confess and speak the truth in love, to the end that we may grow up into Christ in all things. Thus taught the apostle Paul, one of the truest, most heroic and most saintly of men.

I infer, then, that we ought all to study what we are and what we believe, that we ought all to endeavor to obtain some distinct and definite views of theology and religion, that we ought to strive henceforth to be "no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine," but have beliefs and principles as a basis of character. And whatever our beliefs and principles may be, whenever we discover and become aware of them, we should seek that church, or worshipping society of Christians, which is best adapted to us, and through which we may be best assisted in the work of Christian growth and salvation. If Methodists, we should gather with the Methodists; if Calvinists, with the Calvinists; if Unitarians, with the Unitarians. If we should be in sacred earnest about anything in the world, it ought

to be in this matter, where the growth of the Christian character, and the concern of spiritual safety are at stake.

No sadder sound has ever fallen on my ear than when I have heard persons whom I wished to respect, say that truthfulness in this matter is of subordinate consequence. For such a confession reveals a radical moral defect. Men or women who can deliberately subordinate the truth, as God has given it to them in the persuasion of their own minds,—men or women, I say, who can deliberately subordinate their own mentally discerned truth to the call of any temporary convenience or fashionable conformity, evince an incapacity for moral distinctions which must impair our confidence in them in all that relates to moral distinctions. If they are not faithful to the truth as they discern it, can we expect them to be faithful to the right as they discern it, any farther than it may suit their convenience? In such case truth and error, right and wrong, become merely conventional matters to the apprehension. Truthfulness and honesty will be followed to-day if it suits the purpose of to-day. Untruthfulness and dishonesty will be followed to-morrow if it suits the purpose of to-morrow. This amounts to a dethronement of the living God. Hampered by such debasing conceptions of God, of truth, and right and duty, growth into the likeness of Christ becomes an impossible thing.

But while truthfulness is necessary, we must remember that truthfulness alone will not be sufficient.

It must be combined with charity. The truth is to be spoken and maintained in love. Whatever our beliefs may be, they ought to be held and set forth in a perfectly charitable spirit. We must do justice to the motives of others, and keep in mind that they have rights as well as ourselves. Harshness of thought among honest differences of belief is an obvious anomaly, and a grave offence against the sublime purpose of Christianity. And arrogance becomes worse than folly here. It is a crime against unity—against that Christian unity of spirit which is the mark of the true Church universal, amid the inevitable diversities of belief. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples,” said Jesus, “if ye have love one to another.” (*John* xiii. 35.)

Christian friends; the light of Jesus was for a light to the world. It shines as a guidance for every struggling and seeking soul. It shines throughout the ages, a light divine in human form, to win human hearts, and lead them in the heavenly way. It is the most precious gift of the great Father's mercy to our straying and sinful race. And when, through stillness of mind and devout prayer, we come to discern the spiritual meaning of that life, and desire conformity thereto, we find ourselves in the ascending way which leads to a perfect fruition in God. Growth in the Christian likeness is ascent toward God. This comes through love and truthfulness. Any root of ill-will or untruthfulness chokes heavenly growth. Conformity to mere custom or convenience, or to the world around, holds

us to a low and vulgar level of character, quenching all holy and hopeful spiritual life. "Be ye not conformed to this world," said the apostle, "but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." (*Rom. xii. 2.*) Divine transformation, moral and spiritual renewal,—let this be the grand and inspiring purpose of our lives! All worldly customs shall fade away, all worldly convenience perish, all worldly associations come to nought; but the soul, seeking to grow into the likeness of Christ, shall become stronger day by day, outlasting time, to grow with an ever ascending growth, when time itself shall be no longer.

SERMON XVII.

INWARD RENEWAL GREATER THAN OUTWARD MIRACLES.

“He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.”—*John xiv. 12.*

WE see by the context that the works of the Savior here referred to, were of the external and palpable kind, or those which we commonly call miracles. Our Lord appeals directly to these as a token of his special connection with heaven. The words which he spake were a higher token than the works which he wrought; but there were few who heard them who were able to discern the depth and fulness of their divine meaning. The clear-seeing and heavenly mind discovers in Jesus speaking the beatitudes, something of a higher and diviner order than Jesus feeding the five thousand. In the one case he supplied the bread to those who were an hungered with the hunger of the body. In the other case, he supplied the bread which was to fill

those who were hungering after righteousness, with the hunger of the soul. The eyes and the hearts of the men of his generation were set in another direction, so that they could not see nor appreciate the spiritual purpose of the Lord. The proclamation of a Hebrew national triumph would have been more grateful to their ears than any spiritual utterance, though coming direct from the bosom of the Father. "I am in the Father, and the Father in me," said Christ. "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works' sake." (*John* xiv. 10, 11.)

Thus it was that Jesus appealed to his works as a token of his divine commission. If, by reason of the dulness of their apprehension, and the dimness of their spiritual vision, the people could not realize the value and significance of his words, there were the works—so rare and palpable, that they must needs arrest attention by the wonder which they excited. His miracles of healing and resuscitation, were obviously out of the observed order of nature, and the rude multitudes felt that no man could do such works, except God were with him. In this way, by the more palpable demonstration of outward miracles, was their attention arrested. And this done, they could the more readily be brought to assume that thoughtful and docile posture of mind through which they might receive the deeper things of the kingdom of God..

A miracle is a marvel ; and because of its marvellous character, it strikes the mind with special force. A miracle is a marvel, but not out of the order of nature—only out of the commonly observed order of nature. A miracle is a marvel, but not an unnatural marvel ; and it is only within given limitations, and in a certain sense, that it can be even called a supernatural marvel. If a man says, broadly, that a miracle is impossible, I cannot help regarding it as the mark of an unphilosophical mind, since the assertion assumes an acquaintance with all the laws and secrets of the universe. The truth is, that man knows but little of the secrets of the universe. His sphere of observation and investigation is limited, and even within this he is frequently at a loss. As for the terms natural and supernatural, these will have as many meanings as we can give to the term nature. If by “ nature,” we mean the order of things as commonly observed by us, then is a miracle supernatural. But if by “ nature” is meant the order of things as existing in the universe, then is a miracle natural ;—*in* the nature of things, not *outside* of it, or *above* it. That distant planet, away on the outermost verge of our system, has been observed for centuries, true to its orbit round the central sun. So far as it is concerned, this is the commonly observed order of nature. But the keen eye of the practised observer, of a Kant or a Leverrier, sees it shaken from its orbit, and aside from the track to which the laws of the universe held it ever since man first looked upon it. Do they say, therefore, that the law is broken, or that

the Creator is re-adjusting the starry universe? They are too wise to speak such folly. They see in such disturbance the token of law still—other conditions being introduced from some other sphere of nature, hitherto unobserved. They infer the presence of a body sufficient to cause the disturbance through the working of a prevailing law; and in due time the inference is confirmed by actual sight of that body. This is an illustration from the sphere of physical nature. The commonly observed order of things is broken, not through violation of law, but in fulfilment of law, and in consequence of the presence of novel and rare conditions.

And so, what we call a miracle, or wonderful work, is no infraction of law, no after thought of God, no re-adjustment by the Creator of any failure in the order of his universe, or in any part thereof. It comes in fulfilment of law—of a law more rarely observed, because the conditions on which its observed operation depends are more rarely manifested. Aside from the infrequency of the phenomenon, there is nothing more marvellous in the resuscitation of a human being from the dead than in the first bringing of that human being into life. Strictly speaking the one is as unaccountable as the other. And that the one strikes us as more wonderful than the other, is simply because it is more rarely witnessed. In the physical universe we are surrounded by marvels, and every generation brings more clearly to light the existence of laws with which former generations were unacquainted, and whose operations had

surprised or awed them. We dwell but in a small section of God's universe, and know little of the mode of our own soul's connection with our own bodies; and quite as little, certainly, of the operation of mind upon matter throughout the varied spheres. It may be a law of the universe that special spiritual endowments have a controlling influence over matter and mind, under certain conditions and within certain limitations. No man can properly affirm that it is not so, and no man, therefore, can properly affirm that a miracle is an impossible thing.

We call the recorded works of Jesus great and wonderful. And surely they were so. But greater works than these were his believing and faithful disciples to do. How did the works of the disciples exceed in greatness those of the Master? Shall we examine the catalogue of apostolic miracles, and render a reply by comparing the amount of wonder which in each case they were calculated to excite? This has been done, but it is now quite generally seen to be superficial and deceptive. The comparison must not be made of degree, but of kind. If we compare the outward miracles of each, and confine our comparison to these, our wonder will be excited, but the faculty of wonder is not the best or deepest part of us. When our Savior said that his believing disciples should accomplish greater works than even his miracles, he did not intend a comparison of degree, but of kind. He did not intend to compare their miracles with his, which would be a comparison of degree, but

their works of another order, which was a comparison of kind. He looked forward, as I conceive, to the deeper, and more widely extended, spiritual impulse, which the world was to receive from their preaching and labors when he himself should be taken away from earthly sight.

During the earthly lifetime of the Lord his religion made a very limited progress. By the wonderful works which he wrought to arrest attention, and by the wonderful words which he spoke to fill men's thoughts, by the heavenly spirit which he breathed, and by the heavenly life which he lived, he laid the foundation on which the apostles were to build, and he ushered in that new kingdom which they were to extend. But, as we all know, the people generally, and his own apostles also, looked for something else in their Messiah than a purely spiritual king, who was to redeem them from iniquity. And while they strained their eyes and hopes toward temporal power and splendor, they failed to discern the grand moral purpose of the Lord's mission. Hence such blind mistakes as that of the mother of James and John, when she besought the Christ for places of special prominence in his kingdom. Hence the moral anomaly of such a question as that of his own apostles, when they asked him "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" The crucifixion of the Lord, and the withdrawal of his personal presence destroyed such misapprehensions, and out of their ruin gradually arose the spiritual church and kingdom, which was to

be permanent among men, and the instrument of salvation to all people. We know how it was in Jerusalem; his disciples fled when they saw him taken to be crucified. And even after his resurrection had reassured them, out of all the multitudes who heard him speak and teach, not many more than a hundred came together as his avowed and believing disciples. But the stumbling-block of the vulgar expectation was removed, and now the way was more clear for the faithful apostles to work, and by moving the hearts of men to righteousness, to work greater works than any outward miracles whatsoever. When Peter in Jerusalem *moved the hearts* of thousands at a time, so that they cried out "men and brethren, what shall we do?" he accomplished a work of a grander order than even Christ did when in the desert place he *filled the mouths* of the thousands. For look at the result in either case. In the one case the multitude followed Jesus, as he himself said, because they did eat of the loaves and were filled. In the other case they repented, and were baptised for the remission of their sins. The Lord, with prophetic eye, saw such deeply marked and widely extended spiritual results of the apostles' labors, and hence he assured them that they should become the instruments of greater works than even his own miracles.

For herein lies the chief glory and special value of the gospel—in bringing men to a knowledge of themselves, in revealing to them the impurity of their own hearts, and perversity of their own wills, and thus

stirring them up from a blind and dull content with a low moral condition, to higher aims and more heavenly purposes. It is designed to awake them from the death of sin, and quicken them to a life of righteousness. And to this end were all the words and works of the Lord, and of his apostles, instrumental and subservient. This, in fact, is the grandest work of all—this redemption of the soul from sin by the infusion of a new and heavenly life.

All faithful disciples may become instruments for the accomplishment of this great work. Every believer may become an apostle, nay, he is bound to become an apostle, and within the circuit of his opportunity to do an apostle's work. God has not forsaken the world, nor has Christ forsaken his followers though his personal presence is withdrawn from the earth. The spirit of God, and the spiritual power of the Lord, is with every sincere disciple still, to strengthen his heart and his hands for the work of the divine kingdom. Death and life are always in conflict. Every thoughtful soul feels it betimes. The high resolution and upward aspiration are born into life only to be strangled by the next base appetite, or smothered by the gradually accumulating weight of spiritual indifference. How this crushes all divine life out of us, and wraps us in a body of spiritual death! And the worst of it all is that the more we yield, the less we perceive the power of this death. The soul goes forth in the strength and excitement of its daily vanities, while it is empty of that heavenly life which alone

can uplift and sustain it amid earthly trial and vicissitude. Who shall deliver us from these carnal vanities and transient excitements, from this burden of spiritual indifference, and from the body of this death? Would that, like the great apostle, we might be able, out of the depths of a renewed experience, to thank God for deliverance through Christ the Lord. Through him the life of God flows, which is to renew and redeem all our souls, and by the devout seeking and faithful appropriation of this life, we may work a work in itself greater than any outward miracle.

Our own souls are to be the central points of all our spiritual watching and spiritual work. But as Andrew, when he found the Messiah, ran and called his brother that he too might share the joy and the blessing, so every heart that feels its own deliverance will be ready and eager to help others by showing them the way of rectitude, self-conquest, fidelity and spiritual peace. It is the sign of a dead soul when it takes no interest in spiritual work. No man liveth to himself in any sense, and surely no man ought to live to himself spiritually. As the Lord still prays for us, as for Peter of old, so likewise to us, as well as to him, his word is "when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." There is error and ignorance and suffering and sin all around us, and if we find ourselves contented to pursue our daily callings, which minister primarily to our own selfishness, without thinking of the condition of our suffering brothers, or without moving a hand for their help, it is a standing token of our moral deadness and lack of spiri-

tual life. I wish we could all learn to try ourselves even by this simple test. It hath been said that it is "more blessed to give than to receive." The saying carries a rich treasure of meaning, worthy of the Lord. In helping others we help and strengthen ourselves. In extending the sphere of our active sympathies we enlarge our own souls, and augment their capacity of receiving of the higher life which flows from God to men. If we could learn, then, to try ourselves by the simple test proposed, it might bring us, through the grace of God, to such a knowledge of ourselves as would create a craving for some higher order of life than that to which our daily selfishness holds us. To administer physical help and comfort to the body is well, and ought to be done. But as mind and soul are greater and more lasting than the body, the light and the life which uplift and purify these ought not to be withheld. This spiritual light and life ought to be regarded as the highest thing needful. And the humblest soul that truly lives and believes, may become the instrument of guiding others to the Infinite Fountain, which is God.

Yes, I say again, with each of us our own soul is to be the central point of our spiritual watching and spiritual work. Until this is cleansed and clear-seeing, conscious of divine realities, and convinced of the incomparable supremacy of spiritual interests, we are destitute alike of requisite motive and requisite force to help or benefit others. A sphere for the accomplishment of great works—of greater works than out-

ward miracles—lies around us all. We are encompassed by spiritual indifference, which darkens the soul's vision Godward, and through which all high aspiration and holy and self-denying effort, are stifled in their birth. The nobleness of a heavenly aim is not thought of, or thought of, perhaps, only as visionary or fanatical. The most hopeless burden of spiritual death is not to be found always in the dens of neglected pauperism and crime. There, indeed, we may see human vice in its most active and offensive forms, but it is not there only that we may find the most hopeless condition of the human soul. In the homes of comfortable competence—in the abodes of prosperous affluence—where the appliances of our modern civilization are freely used and displayed, there may the body of this death be often, often found. The man goes out and comes in, day after day, with no thought more noble or elevated than that of his common calling as dedicated to the god of earthly success. He worships this god of success in every act of his daily life, and if this, his idol, forsakes him, he feels that life is a failure, and that he has nothing more left. If success cleaves to him and favors him, his thought is that he wants nothing more,—his highest ideal is realized. The woman dwells by her well-provided board, or amid her carpets and her tapestries, her dress, and her cherished circle. These be her gods. For these, at least she is content to live, without looking higher, or striving after any more heavenly aim. The young man and young woman copy their elders, and they become empty and vain, frivol-

ous and earthly, without seriousness of purpose, or elevation of soul. All these are so many indications of the peril which besets our condition of competence or of prosperous affluence. How often do we find religion and religious institutions neglected just in proportion as we gain larger dwellings, finer furniture, and more extended social or other interests. This shows at once the peril of our condition, and the lack of spiritual vitality in the soul. Here Christ comes to heal and restore, the moment we apply to him for remedy and relief. Wherein did he find his life? Obviously not in meats and drinks, not in earthly success and earthly display, but in righteousness and peace and spiritual joy;—making it his meat and drink to do the will of his Father in heaven, although fidelity thereto made him homeless and without a place to lay his head, and, finally, brought him to earthly ignominy, earthly suffering, and a malefactor's death. "I am the vine," said Jesus, "ye are the branches." Through a living faith we become grafted in him, and the divine life which flows through him, flows through us, and we live henceforth as he did, for God rather than for ourselves—for truth and rectitude, for holiness and love, as the prime end of existence.

I wish I could adequately point out the joy and blessedness and everlasting peace of a renewed life thus dedicated to God—the glory of such an elevated aim, and the uplifting power of a purpose so purely divine. But I cannot. This I know, however, that charged with such a life-purpose, the soul could not but loathe

the meanness of its former indolence, and the sinfulness of its former sin, and feel a deep and living interest in all other souls still bound by these deadening spells. The stars of midnight rise and set, they shine serenely far away in their unfathomed distances,—but if I were to put forth my arm, and by a marvel of power pluck them from their spheres, so that they should rise, and set, and shine no more, the work would not be so great a work as the spiritual awakening of a single soul, and its permanent renewal unto a heavenly life. Greater works than miracles may be accomplished in our own hearts, and within the limits of our own homesteads. Such works are done when by timely word, by affectionate counsel, or by the unflinching fidelity of our own life, we stir up young or old to higher seeking, to more elevated purpose, and to thorough loyalty of heart to God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

SERMON XVIII.

DUTY OF THE RICH TO THE POOR. *

“I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive.”—*Acts xx. 35.*

THUS spoke the apostle Paul at his last affecting interview with the elders of Ephesus. Here he reminds them of the Christian obligation to support the weak and needy who have become too poor and exhausted to be able to support themselves. And he reminds them, too, of those precious words of the Lord Jesus, not recorded elsewhere, but so pregnant with spiritual meaning and practical value. Rightly understood, the Gospel establishes a bond between man and man, and between man and God, and promotes and sustains a constant flow of good will and good works.

Of all the teaching which fell from the lips of our Lord during his earthly ministry, none is more direct

* Preached, March 1st, 1863, with reference to the proposed Protestant House of Industry and Refuge in Montreal.

and emphatic than that which relates to this point, the *Duty of the rich to the poor*. And this teaching is repeated throughout the apostolic writings, but still the force of the Master's own words asserts itself above all the subsequent words of his apostles. Look at his allegory of the great judgment, put on record by the Evangelist Matthew, and see the grounds on which that judgment is carried on. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom; . . . for I was hungry and ye gave me meat; . . . a stranger and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me; . . . Then shall the righteous answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? . . . or a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? . . . And the king shall answer, verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." In this way does our Lord identify himself with suffering humanity in its various forms, as brother with brother. What can be more striking and emphatic than this statement? Yet he would increase its force, and impress it more deeply on our hearts by its repetition in negative form. "Depart ye cursed: for I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; . . . Lord when saw we thee hungry, or thirsty, or naked, and did not minister unto thee? . . . verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me."

In this way, I repeat, does our Lord identify himself with humanity in its want, and loneliness, and sickness, and various trials. Even with the friendless outcast,

and the prisoner pining in his cell, does the loving Jesus identify himself. The deeds of kindness and mercy done to these and such as these, he accepts as service and homage to himself. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Morality here becomes piety. It is the fruit of a godlike love. How useless all profession of faith and piety is, without corresponding well-doing, we are clearly informed elsewhere by the Lord. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven." The doing of the will of God is the proper blossom and fruit of the heart-felt love of God. By identifying himself with weak, needy and suffering humanity, as we see he does, Jesus identifies the cause of man with the cause of God. For he was nearest to God—in the very "bosom of the Father," and stood upon the earth as God's image and representative. Elsewhere, in a like spirit and after a similar form, he identifies himself with his apostles, and God with himself. "He that receiveth you," he says, "receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." The cause of Jesus is at once the cause of man and the cause of God. And by his showing we find that he who serves man out of a loving heart, renders a service to the good God which, indeed, he will not despise. Hence may we see that piety in its ripest form—in its amplest development, is not contemplative, merely, but active and earnest in good deeds.

Now when I look at the world as it is, I am struck with the fitness of such a religion as that of Jesus to such a world as we have. I see in it the healing medicine which would cure the body social of the many sores which afflict it. We observe great social inequalities, but it is not of these that we ought to complain. With as much reason, I think, might we complain of the existence of hills and valleys in a landscape. It was written for the Hebrews that the poor should never cease out of the land, and the writing stands good for all nations. The poorer and the richer classes we shall always have, so long as men are made, naturally, some stronger and some weaker. I do not complain, then, of the obvious ordinance of God, that there should be such gradations in society. But what we have to deplore is the suffering of the weaker and the poorer classes, and the prevailing selfishness of the wealthier and stronger classes. It is a common saying that one half the world does not know how the other half lives. It is this prevailing separation, non-acquaintance and neglect which we have to deplore. Suffering is not necessarily connected with poverty any more than happiness is with wealth. But that there is an immense amount of suffering among the weaker and poorer classes in all civilized lands, none of us needs to be told.

I would not exaggerate the perils of our own times, but I would keep them carefully in mind. If men now-a-days are involved in a great heat of competition—greater than at any former time—it is

because of the rapid progress in those branches of discovery and invention which facilitate human intercourse. A mine in Canada, California, or elsewhere, has now the whole world for an almost immediate market. The merchant here in Montreal can, within an hour's time, commence and close a bargain with the merchant of Boston, New York or Chicago. This great extension of the area of operations has infused a quicker pulse into the whole mercantile body, and through it, has affected the general body of active society. The heat of competition in active society very frequently rises to a fever heat. Self and self-interest absorb all the living thought of multitudes. Onward they press, these strong-minded and strong-handed selfish men, jostling out of the way, or trampling under foot their weaker and less capable brethren. Their fortunes swell, their purses are enlarged, grand houses are raised, amply furnished with purple and fine linen, and all the appliances of modern upholstery; luxuries for eye and ear and palate abound, and are enjoyed until enjoyment palls again. Meanwhile, within the sight of these grand houses and luxurious appliances, are the weak and poor languishing in want—waging a life-long war with grim misery, and harassed at every turn with the hard temptations of their lot. The contrasts of St. James and St. Giles, of Fifth Avenue and Five Points, are repeated to a greater or less extent in every city and larger centre of population in the civilized world.

The privations endured by the weak, poor and igno-

rant, in the larger cities and central points of population, are beyond the conception of most of those who live in ease and luxury. That such should be the case, is a very dark blot upon our present civilization. When these sufferings are ferretted out and published abroad by the patience and perseverance of some rare philanthropy, every feeling heart contemplates the picture with unaffected concern. That great masses of human beings should be without adequate food, raiment and shelter; perishing for lack of the first elements of helpful and saving knowledge; degraded and suffering through sin, without knowing the cause of their degradation and suffering; seeking leave to toil and not obtain the privilege, or if they do, should be compelled to ply a busy hand from an aching head and an empty stomach;—that great masses of our fellow-creatures should be suffering so sadly, and in so many ways, is, indeed, enough to move any heart not altogether stone, and arrest the attention of any mind not wholly hardened by the intensity of its selfishness. That all this poverty and want and crime and suffering should co-exist side by side with so much superfluous wealth and ostentatious living, and under shadow, we may say, of large and costly institutions for the promotion of education and religion, is a matter very humiliating to those notions of advancement upon which this age is so apt to pride itself. It is a grief to the Christian philanthropist, a problem to the social philosopher, a practical difficulty to the statesman. We need not now enter upon the cause of these great

and striking social inequalities, or challenge the ages that are past for a neglect of duty. Still we may say, that if the benign and helpful spirit of the Gospel had been duly cherished and acted on, a different result would now be visible throughout the civilized world of Christendom. "I have showed you," saith the apostle, "that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." This is the spirit of Christianity. The strong, active, prosperous, wealthy and advancing men, as, by the labor of head and hand, they push themselves forward; instead of neglecting their weaker fellow-men, or jostling them aside, or trampling them under foot, they should seek by some way to bring them along with them—by caring for them, educating them and otherwise helping them. "Inasmuch," saith the Lord, "as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

A religion so essentially benevolent as ours, establishes a link between the different orders of men, the richer and the poorer, the stronger and the weaker, those who suffer and those who enjoy. And herein may we see its admirable fitness to such a world as we have. If this link were recognised, and not ignored, by the more favored classes, a hopeful change would soon be visible in the weaker and depressed classes. If, instead of being regarded merely as outcasts or burdens to society, or dangerous persons, or persons of another and inferior mould, these were looked upon

with fraternal sympathy, and addressed in the loving and helpful spirit of the Gospel, a new feeling of hope would spring up within them, and new motives would be quickened there, which would be to them a new power. If this were done, the poor, the weak, the outcast and the suspected, who form the depressed and suffering classes, would be stirred to a new sense of their manhood and its responsibilities. They would come to recognise what they owe to themselves, to their fellow-men and to their God. This recognition would be the recognition of religion as a vital and personal concern. And this would be their healing and their permanent safeguard; and the healing and protection of society.

Christianity has been the parent of many organizations for the help and elevation of the poorer and suffering classes. From the first its mission has been emphatically one of mercy. "The spirit of the Lord God was upon the Lord Jesus Christ, because he had anointed him to preach the gospel unto the poor, and sent him to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." Wherever we find an organization which has for its end the promotion, in any form, of the beneficent mission of the gospel, it ought to command our sympathy and encouragement. Organized societies for such purpose have great uses, and accomplish results which could scarcely be accomplished by any amount of separate individual effort. Still, I must say that we

ought not rely solely on any organizations, however effective—we ought not rely solely on them for the help and elevation of the weaker and depressed classes of society. What I mean to say is, that we ought not allow the individual to be hidden behind the organization. As individuals, the more favored classes ought to show an active sympathy and interest in the depressed classes. The Christian idea and teaching is that they should all be linked together by the living bond of love, that the one class, as they rise and advance, should endeavor to bring the other class along with them. Mere contributions of money to sustain a charitable organization or society does not meet in full the beneficent demand of Christianity. Such a mode may be little better than a formalism. There can be no proper life in our beneficence unless we infuse into it some of the living spirit of the individual. Money, after all, though very useful, may be a very cold and dead gift. It always is so when the heart of the giver does not go along with it. It is the heart going freely along with it which brings to the giver the promised blessing.

That money is a leading power in society is too plain to be questioned. The best dispositions of mind cannot carry on a charitable organization, if generous contributions of substance be not forthcoming. And the fact that money is a confessed power in the world works steadily on man's natural desire to accumulate, urging him to unsleeping vigilance and persistent toil. Now nothing tests our character more strictly than our

manner of dealing with results here. Our gathered wealth may become a means of revealing our greatness, or a means of publishing our baseness of soul. Wealth is a pleasant but perilous possession. It has its special temptations as well as poverty. Hence the wise prayer of Agur: "give me neither poverty nor riches." The Christian soul instinctively repels the cynical philosophy, and rejoices not in the misfortunes of a neighbor, but in his good success. His success in money making, however, is not a good success, but a sad failure, if wealth comes to him in abundance before he knows how to put it to a good and generous use. Wealth is a token of capacity. When I see a man grow rich, I know that it does not come through blind chance, or luck, as some who have been less successful are apt to say. No, every thousand dollars he has, represents a well-measured thought—a balancing of probabilities, wherein all the possibilities of wind and tide and seasonal changes may have been brought under review; or the possibilities of war and peace and political changes. Wealth is a token of capacity—of balanced judgment and concentration of mind, at least in one direction. But if its coming perverts the mind, holding it always and exclusively in that one direction, it would have been a thousand-fold better for the man if he had never become the master of a thousand dollars.

There are few communities which evince more steady signs of growing prosperity than our own. Less rapid it may be, than that of some other cities which

might be named, but not less likely to be durable. Our new streets, stretching wide and far into the suburbs, show our increasing population. Our new buildings for various purposes, ecclesiastical and commercial, civic and domestic ;—our new churches and banks, and warehouses, and markets, and dwellings—in their solidity of structure and architectural elegance, betoken an advancing prosperity, and advancing taste. These are the unmistakable signs of augmented and augmenting wealth. But amid this steady growth of wealth in our community, what thought has been given to the poor? While the strong and capable men were pushing on and getting rich, the weaker and less capable were gravitating towards poverty—some of them falling into a condition so low that direct help was needed to save them from the suffering of hunger nakedness. What amount of thought or measure of care have we given to these? It has amounted to something, but has the measure been adequate? This question, I fear, would condemn us in any open court of Christ. The Son of man sitting in judgment on the throne of his glory, and judging us by his own revealed tests, would pronounce against us. Whatever may have been the fidelity of individuals among us, as a community we should be found wanting.

In saying this, however, we must not fail to discriminate. Ours is a mixed community, containing two prominent, distinctive types of religion—Roman Catholic and Protestant. The Protestant community is less numerous than the Catholic. As to the relative wealth

of these different communities I offer no statement, but must remind you that the wealth of each differs in kind somewhat from that of the other ; and is under control of a somewhat different sort. The Protestant wealth of our community is of purely commercial, and comparatively recent origin ; and is held under individual control. The Catholic wealth, on the other hand, is, to a notable extent, of feudal and more remote origin ; and largely held under control of ecclesiastical and religious corporations. Now wealth, coming by feudal grant long ago, to such corporations for charitable and kindred purposes, shows results at the present time peculiar to itself, and not possible to Protestantism. This is to be borne in mind when we look at the extensive structures which Catholic wealth has raised for the relief of the poor and suffering. I do not say this to detract from their value, but to do justice to all, not forgetting that this rich inheritance from former times is supplemented in these times by the individual contributions of our Roman Catholic brethren. Let us always honor the charitable disposition of wealth, whether it come from feudal or other source, or from our own or a remote age.

We can readily account, then, for the fact that the largest and most prominent charitable institutions of our city are of Roman Catholic origin, and under Roman Catholic management. Protestantism has not yet produced any institutions here which can approach these in extent and efficiency. Protestantism from its nature can never concentrate its energies and resources

as Catholicism can. The strict hierarchism of the Roman Church gives it this advantage—an advantage, however, which we believe to be far more than counterbalanced by its disadvantages. Our Protestant wealth, I have said, is of commercial and comparatively recent origin, and held under individual control. Its growth in the present generation has been very marked. And now, having made the requisite distinction as between the Catholic and Protestant portions of our general community, let us repeat our question with more special reference to the Protestant part of the community:—As we grew richer and richer, year after year, what amount of thought or measure of care have we given to the poor? The Protestant community must confess that it has fallen short in this respect. For many years past there has been an uneasy feeling of this short-coming in the minds of some good and thoughtful men, who have made efforts, by conversation and otherwise, to arouse a more general interest in the matter; but without any marked result thus far.

The dawn of a better day, however, seems at length to have come in the movement publicly inaugurated within three months, the leading points of which may be briefly stated. About the middle of December last, a number of gentlemen who had had the project of making some farther Protestant provision for the poor, under consideration for several months previously, called a more general meeting for the purpose of laying the matter before it, and obtaining wider counsel and co-operation. At this meeting a report

was presented from a committee appointed by a former preliminary meeting. At this more general meeting the discussion dealt mainly with the manner of management of the institution then proposed. It was asserted by gentlemen who had made informal inquiry in reliable and influential quarters among our Roman Catholic fellow citizens, that they on their part did not consider co-operation as between their co-religionists and Protestants, desirable or even possible in such a matter. There were some at the meeting who wished it might have been otherwise, thinking that in an affair of public and practical charity, theological and ritual peculiarities might have been held in abeyance. This was my own view of the matter, but it became evident that it would not be possible to act upon it. We must be patient with that defective apprehension of Christianity so common throughout Christendom, which is prone to elevate the accidental to the place of the essential. Love God with all the strength of thy nature—this first, said our Lord. Then, second, love thy neighbor as thyself. All the law and prophets hang on these two commands—act them out in the life, not after the manner of the Priest and Levite, but in the spirit of the good Samaritan, and thou shalt live. So hath the loving Christ declared, but neither Protestant nor Romanist, as such, can fathom the depths divine of this double command, or scale its heights, or discern the breadth of its sweep, where it blends the horizon of the earthly life with the heavenly. To do this we must rise out of our peculiarities of Pro-

testantism and Catholicism to the higher plane of the true Christian life, where all is joyous, generous and loving, through the life of God which dwells in us, and by virtue of which we can place such peculiarities not out of mind entirely, but out of sight for a while. When the Christianity of Christendom comes to perfection we shall have less trouble in making arrangements to carry out its obvious work. Meantime let us be patient, and hold ourselves ready to work in the cause of Christianity and the poor, with what methods we can command. If Catholics and Protestants may not work together, let them work separately. This was the decision arrived at, and laid down as the basis of further proceedings.

The next question raised was on the title of the institution, turning mainly on the manner and place where the distinctive term Protestant should be introduced. The proposition of styling it a "House of Industry and Refuge for the Protestant poor" was, after much consideration, deliberately set aside, and another form adopted as more fitting, viz: the "Protestant House of Industry and Refuge"—the declared intention being to organize and maintain it under Protestant management. Thus styled and organized it will meet a want which has been long felt in this community. A place will be provided for the relief of the poor, where they will not only not be presented with the ritual of the Roman Catholic religion, but they will be provided with the simpler ritual of the Protestant religion. A week after this meeting was held—that is, on Christ-

mas day last, the venerable Catholic Bishop of the diocese of Montreal wrote a pastoral letter from the Hotel Dieu of this city, conceived in the most kindly spirit toward all concerned, wherein he corroborated entirely the report made at the meeting with respect to the impossibility of co-operation as between Catholics and Protestants, in such a proposed work of charity. This official declaration of the highest dignitary of the Roman Church in our city removed all doubt as to the mind of the Catholic community in this affair. And thenceforth the Protestant action became more compact, resolute, and promising. An institution under Protestant management, where the ministrations of religion would be according to Protestant form and usage, would be the natural place for the Protestant poor to seek, and be sent for relief, just as the Catholic poor naturally seek, and are found in Catholic institutions; while poor, ignorant, and destitute persons, who could scarcely declare themselves either Protestant or Catholic without doing damage to their mental sincerity, will find their way for relief to one or other, as Providence, working through men and circumstances, may direct.

Now an institution, such as this proposed "Protestant House of Industry and Refuge," must be raised and supported by the free-will offerings of the Protestant community of this city. And in order to approach their fellow citizens with fuller authority to receive such offerings, the gentlemen interested in the movement decided on calling a public meeting by public

advertisement. This public meeting took place about the middle of January last, and formally "approved of the proposal to establish a Protestant House of Industry and Refuge, and pledged itself to use the utmost exertion to institute and maintain it." The call for this meeting was signed by the Protestant clergymen of the city generally, and this resolution, no doubt, had the cordial concurrence of all. A committee was appointed to collect funds, and subscription lists were opened. These lists are still open, inviting contributions from all who are able to give. The movement, as it now appears, gives hope of a successful issue, but the measure of its success depends altogether on the measure of our Protestant generosity in this cause of practical charity.

Engaged in an undertaking of this kind, it does not become us to scan the motives of our brother men whether they give, or abstain from giving. Let us persuade them by the love of Christ and the behests of the gospel, to a generous distribution, reminding them, as the apostle did, that the strong ought to support the weak, and reminding, them too, as the apostle did, of the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "it is more blessed to give than to receive." But let us leave their motives to be dealt with by God alone. Those who engage in an enterprise like this, in order to carry it to a successful issue must regard themselves as the agents and advocates of the poor, and should hold themselves ready to merge their personal predilections in the wider sphere of their clients' interest. Various

men will doubtless give through various motives. And though one of these only, the impulse of the loving heart, will bring benefit to the giver, the gifts of all may nevertheless be helpful to the receiver. Hear the apostle again, "though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." It profiteth *me* nothing, indeed, yet, since my gift feeds the poor, it helps *him*.

Motives are manifold. Time limits us now to a notice of three. The lowest form of prudence may move some men to give. A man thus moved will say: "If I do not provide something for the poor, they will become dangerous in society, and my property will be jeopardised by their presence. Or, they may become burdensome to society, and my property will be heavily taxed for their support." And such a man gives, in order to escape a greater evil. Another man may be moved through a pressure of conscience. Such a man will say: "It is not right that I should enjoy so much from my wealth, while my poorer brother suffers so much from his poverty. The contrast reminds me of duty unperformed, and I must do something, else my purple and fine linen will sting me with pain, and my sumptuous fare be as ashes to my taste. I am driven to give for my own relief, though I cannot do so without some halting, for my money has a close hold on my heart." Others give through pure love—love of Christ, and the cause of the poor. And these will give freely, without the halting of an unwilling heart driven by conscience, or the tedious calculations of a selfish

policy. Love gives freely, out of a spirit of sacrifice akin to that of Christ, saying: "Even as my dear Lord gave himself for me, so give I of my substance to him as he comes to me in the form of the weak, the poor, and the suffering ones—his brethren and mine."

Motives are manifold, and mix themselves variously in various minds. In founding an institution like that proposed, free room should be made for all classes of gifts which will be of service to the poor. The Protestant community of this city is a growing one, and we should lay the foundation of our proposed Protestant institution, as broad and solid as we can. The ability exists to do this—to found and endow an institution adequate to the necessity. Shall the will be halting or lacking? As I look at our general Protestant community, so active and prosperous, I cannot suspect or suppose a lacking will in a matter of such clear Christian obligation. I hope rather to see the project dealt with, and carried out as a matter of privilege. And thus, certainly, it will be regarded by every one who has realized the meaning of the Lord's words when he said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Nor let us ever forget those other words of the Lord: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

SERMON XIX.

PERSONAL SCRUTINY.

“ Lord, is it I?—*Matt. xxvi. 22.*”

THERE is a memorable sense in which it may be said that every soul should be its own central point of observation. In the universe God is central and circumferent—filling all things. Man is not only the creature but the child of God—a living soul, by virtue of the divine spirit breathed into him at the first, giving him a breath or spirit of life of a higher order than mere animal existence. Man always, and under all circumstances, lies within the domain of God as Sovereign Ruler. But within this infinite domain there is a domain finite, clearly enough marked, within which the individuality of each man has free play to will and to do. He can never escape from the domain of God as Sovereign Ruler, but he may, through the obedience of love, or the disobedience of wilfulness or estranged affection, either keep near to God as heavenly Father,

or go far away from his household. This freedom to will and to do, is at once man's glory and man's peril. And, in this matter of moral responsibility, the soul is in a safe state only when its first thoughts of scrutiny and inquest are turned upon itself. Throughout the wide domain of human duty, when we are startled by actual or possible faithlessness, in any direction, then should the individual soul be regarded as central, and the first glance of scrutiny be cast inward and there. Then should the first question be—"Lord, is it I?"

The Gospel of Christ is a covenant, sealed with many seals—a message authenticated by many tokens. One of its tokens of authentication I find in this—viz., that the light of the true religion is shown forth in a living person. I become more and more convinced of the value and significance of this token, as I read, year after year, one or other discussion concerning the "absolute religion," so-called, involving dissertations on abstract truth and goodness, the moral power and proper authority thereof, and so forth; all very good in their own way, and so far as they go. But although the advocates of such theories claim to reach the ultimate point of the discussion thereby, to my mind they fall far and sadly short of it. We are bound not only to look at the absolute truth and goodness, but to the mass of humanity on whom these are to take effect. Truth and goodness considered as abstractions have but small power. That they are authoritative, rightly demanding obedience, is undoubted. But how can they make their appeal felt? One man in a thousand, perhaps, by

reason of finer moral apprehension may, practically, recognise their claim. But of the mass of human souls, as we see them, toiling with their burdens of daily care, quite unused to abstract thought, and apprehending things only as they are presented in concrete form ;—of this mass, how few will reach any adequate apprehension of the matter for practical purposes. Indeed the mass of the people in Christendom will be confused rather than edified by such discussions. Going out to-day on any highway, how many persons, among the crowds we might meet, would feel any living interest in the most careful discussion concerning the abstractions of form, color and fragrance? Not one in ten. But present to any one of them a visible, palpable combination of these qualities, as seen in a queenly rose, and he will at once appreciate its loveliness. He will prize the flower and enjoy it, although the most elaborate discussion of its qualities would fail to move his admiration, or awaken his interest.

Hence may we see the manifest need, so far as man is concerned, of having the truth and love which are to inspire and redeem him, presented in the form of a living person. And the graciousness of the heavenly Father's purpose in sending Christ,—a man in form and feeling, a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," but filled immeasurably with the divine spirit ;—the heavenly Father's graciousness of purpose, I say, is clearly seen in this condescension to human need. For thus Christ came—the embodiment of heavenly love and truth. In his person and life we see

these divine qualities presented in most simple, attractive and forcible form. By following him from place to place, observing his acts and listening to his words, we are led into the highest secrets of true and holy living. And so may all be led. Not the learned only, or those who can apprehend or appreciate elaborate discussion, but the unlearned and simple-minded, who compose the great mass of the people in all ages and all lands. Whatever, therefore, may be the tenor of present discussions concerning abstract truth and the absolute authority thereof, or whatever may be the importance attached to correct conclusions in the matter, I hold that it is of higher importance to accept the truth as we see it, like a light shining in the person and life of Christ, and transfer it to our own lives, that it may shine like a light there likewise. And we may fairly suspect our own sincerity and depth of purpose, if we find ourselves more eager to criticise distinctions as between the person and the thing, than to receive the truth in the spirit of love and obedience.

As an instrument of impressing men with the beauty and the power of the divine life, a visible personality, inspired without measure with the truth and love from God which make life divine, was urgently needed. And such a personality came in the person of Jesus. By virtue of the truth and love with which he was so thoroughly inspired, he spake with authority. Himself divine, through the immeasurable inspiration of divine truth and love received from God, he came to quicken men, dead in sin, with this higher life of heaven. Him-

self the divine man, he came to lead and lift all men to a renewed participation of divine gifts of the spirit, to make them one with God and in God, as he himself was, in higher measure. We have only to look at the narratives of his life to see what a profound impression he made on those with whom he came in contact. The common people everywhere heard him gladly. His immediate disciples were his personal and strongly attached friends. At his last supper with them, when he foretold the treachery which he clearly foresaw, it was with a troubled spirit on his own part, while they, on their part, heard with sorrowful hearts. Startled with such tidings of approaching faithlessness, each reverted to himself, desiring to know concerning the possibility of such guilt attaching to him. Every one of them began to say, "Lord, is it I?" Each was instantly set to think of himself, in relation to the criminal baseness predicted.

The Lord is no longer with his disciples in bodily presence. No longer with the eye of the body can we see the loved form which embodies the heavenly truth and love, which win and impress our souls. But that form once appeared, and the appearance thereof was for the benefit of men in all time. The physical form of Jesus was mortal and slain upon the cross. The spiritual form of the Christ was immortal, and beyond the power of death. And this, after all, was and is the essential Christ, the permanent Messiah of God to man. This spiritual and undying Messiah is with us still. And still, as we listen to him, may he by his suggestion stir

us to personal scrutiny, leading us, in reference to actual or possible faithlessness, to inquire, "Lord, is it I?"

"Verily, I say unto you," said Jesus, "that one of you shall betray me." "And they began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?" The faithlessness of Judas appears in the most repulsive form. Called to the apostleship and admitted into the circle of personal friendship, yet for a money-bribe he betrayed his Lord into the hands of enemies who sought his life. Judas stands the historic type of traitor in all ages. But all faithlessness is of a kind. The differences are of degree only. Discipleship involves respect and fidelity. Discipleship to Christ involves fidelity to Christ, and by this I mean, emphatically, fidelity to all the divine qualities and perfections embodied in his person. Divine truth and love were incarnate in his human form, making him light of the world, and quickener of new life in men. For more than eighteen centuries that human form has been removed from mortal sight, but the spiritual form abides; —the most commanding figure in history. Truth and love are with us, always, in Christ and as Christ, demanding instant and constant service, appealing to every faculty and affection to win us to their own way as the way of true life. Thus would Christ still lead and guide men to the heavenly Father; making himself personal friend and helper, according to the measure and quality of the disciple's love.

Where love has no deeper root than emotion, its fidelity is uncertain. The cry of "Lord, Lord," may

be often on the lips, while truth is disregarded, righteousness of life neglected, and the Father's will left undone. If love is to bring forth rightful and abiding fruit in the life, its root must be nourished by living principles of rectitude. Not as a luxury, merely, is love to be sought and enjoyed, still less as minister to spiritual pride, but as helper in the way of duty. Herein are we to walk, as Jesus walked, not to please men but to do the Father's will, though it should leave us homeless, friendless, and fainting under the burden of a cross. Thus nourished, the root of love brings forth the fruits of rectitude. Truth becomes sacred in our eyes, and well-doing is regarded as the ever-present requirement of God. Our sympathies are enlarged and our spiritual vision quickened to discern the manifold relations in which we stand. Thus the full sphere of duty becomes more clearly revealed, and all the details thereof.

I have said that fidelity to Christ properly signifies fidelity to the divine qualities and perfections embodied in his person. And so, wherever there is faithlessness to these, there is faithlessness to him. Consider this statement in relation and application to the morality and life of nations. Is man oppressed? or truth set at naught? Is justice held as of small account? or class selfishness predominant? Consider it, again, in relation and application to the morality and the life of communities less extended, as of the city or circle of society around us. Are truth, honor, rectitude, subordinated to personal convenience or mere

conventional expectation? Does impurity exist? or intemperance abound? Does envy prevail? or evil-speaking have free course? Are the stronger unmindful of the weaker? or does sin still stick close between buying and selling?..... Such questions might be extended indefinitely. And the matter might be considered yet farther in relation and application to individual life. Here it is worthy the most careful and prayerful thought. For it is obvious that individual life is the main factor in the production of the aggregate life of society in any and every form. The quality and value of the orchard harvest are to be judged, not only by the product of each separate tree, but, in the first instance, by the quality of the separate apples which are found on the branches.

“Lord, is it I?” Here we have a suggestion to personal scrutiny, uttered under very affecting circumstances. Personal scrutiny is of prime importance as a rule of holy living. You know how Jesus urged it. The beam in thine own eye is to be considered before the mote in thy brother’s. Yet no rule is more likely to be overlooked. Self-love overshadows it. Go out into the streets, and you will find ten men who are ready to scrutinize their neighbors in motive and conduct, and pass judgment on society in general, for one who is ready to scrutinize himself and his own ways. There is, in this matter, an inveterate tendency to look outward, towards the circumference, rather than inward, towards and at the centre.

But in all responsibilities, national and social, as

well as individual, the great question for each of us is, "Lord, is it I?" The limit of our responsibility is to be measured by the answer which is rendered here. Each man will have to bear his own burden, not another's. Each man, I say, will have to bear his own. When national sins prevail, we should say, "Lord, is it I?" and seek to discover how far each of us is responsible for them. For be assured that every man in a free country is responsible for the common sins of the country, so far as he sympathises therewith, or fails to bear testimony against them, when opportunity offers. When social sins prevail, the same question should be uppermost, and knocking at the door of heart and conscience for an answer—still the same question: "Lord, is it I?" For be ye well assured that in many things, as in the sin of intemperance, for example, we may offend heedlessly. The usages we support, through heedlessness, or the desire to satisfy conventional expectation, bring forth disastrous results, visible every day in individual degradation, sin and suffering. Thus, striving to discern our own actual contact with the evil wherever, or in whatever form, it exists, we shall be made acquainted with our true condition, which otherwise we are so likely to overlook. And with the eye of the calm and heavenly Master upon us, we shall be ashamed of our faithlessness to himself and the everlasting laws of his kingdom. As his blessed form rises before us, the image of the majesty of the Highest, we shall be constrained to bow before that majesty in confession of our personal

neglects and sins, and seek that renewal which comes from the cleansing of the ever ready and ever present spirit of God. This gives the renewed heart. This gives the regenerated life, wherein new and loftier purposes mould and control the whole nature of the man. The renewed hearts and the regenerated lives of individual disciples—these form the living stones of that grand temple of redeemed humanity, of which the Lord Jesus himself is the chief corner stone. The great company of renewed and regenerated disciples living above all vulgar and debasing aims, with the eye of the soul fixed on heavenly truth and heavenly excellence, as the grand attainment and purpose of life here and hereafter, now and forever,—this great company, looking unto Jesus as Lord and Leader, and following him as Forerunner, is the harvest of his work of redemption. So let us live, here and now, that we may be found as ripe sheaves at the time of the great gathering.

SERMON XX.

MORAL POSITION.

“And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him: Where art thou?”—*Gen. iii. 9.*

IN our human experience there are, evermore, alternating seasons of sunshine and of shade. The wonderful nature of man, swayed by the uppermost motive of the hour, constantly complicates its own action, and oftentimes contradicts itself. What it would, that it does not; and what it would not, that it does. Hence come conflict and dissatisfaction, shame, remorse and fear.

God has not hidden from us the conditions under which we live. He writes them in our nature, revealing them unmistakably there, so that he who runs may read, and he who looks may see. Every thoughtful man knows them, for they are made patent in human experience. Clouds come and go; shadows thicken, and the soul knows not what light is betimes, or fears

it if it knows. Behold here the working of our moral nature! There is light in the universe—the light of truth and excellence, and the clear eye looks upon it, loves it, and rejoices in it; yea, loves it with a love more than earthly, and rejoices in it with a joy which is nothing less than heavenly. But the clear eye belongs to the loyal soul, and to the loyal soul only. It, only, can properly love the light, and rejoice in the broad and open sunshine. When God, who is perfect truth, and perfect excellence, is devoutly served out of the motions of a loving heart, then is there peace within; that high inward satisfaction which comes from harmonious working of all the moral forces of our nature. And then, too, there is that humble and steadfast confidence toward God, which walks before him without the hiding of shame or halting of fear. This is the walk of the loyal subject and loving child, in presence of the righteous King and loving Father of all.

For the disloyal and unloving soul there is a far different experience. And so there must be. It is not the result of any arbitrary appointment, but comes from a law fixed in our nature—fixed there in mercy by the great and loving God. A most gracious provision it is, smiting us, and stinging us, and driving us to seek a covert wherein to hide. We may set the high commands of heaven at defiance to serve some present purpose of our own, and a transient satisfaction may come from the audacity; but the end is not yet. We may think ourselves wiser than God and the Gospel, and follow forbidden ways, spending our energies

in low and selfish service, hunting after riches, worldly preferment, sensual gratification, and the like—we may find all we seek in this direction, and rejoice in it ; but still I say the end is not yet. There are faculties of our nature which cannot be satisfied with this low service. There is an integral part of our being which protests against continued disloyalty to heaven, and disregard of the highest law. Conscience moves us, and shame seizes us, and remorse stings us : and the fear of the self-condemned soul drives us in quest of a hiding place. God, through conscience, challenges and arraigns us, and we dread an appearance in his presence.

In this way is the scene of Eden's garden re-enacted in every part of this planet of ours, and in every age from Adam's day till our own. That story of the primitive man and his falling, recorded in the opening chapters of the Bible, is, substantially, the story of man in general, wherever he is found. Look into the record : Made in the image of God, the first man was placed in the garden. Something was given him to do. Thus had he a special work allotted to him. Something also was disallowed — the fruit of a certain tree prohibited. Herein was scope given for the free play of the various forces of his moral nature.

We know the result. He broke the divine injunction laid upon him ; this was his fall, and thenceforth all was changed. Through yielding to the power of evil, his moral nature was abased, shame took hold of him ; and he and his wife could no longer look on each other as before. A strange and awful knowledge

flashed on them through their transgression,—a new and startling experience passed into their being, grav- ing itself there, in lines deep and sharp and agonizing. Ashamed to meet each other, just as before, without any covering, Adam and his wife were utterly afraid to appear in the presence of the Lord, and they hid themselves away among the trees of the garden.

Then came the challenge and arraignment. “The Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him; Where art thou?”

Then came the exculpation. The man throwing responsibility on the woman. And the woman, in her turn, throwing it on the serpent.

Then came the condemnation to each and all. The aspect of the world was changed to both man and woman. The conditions of their earthly life became harder. Driven from Eden, they no longer had its joys, when they ceased to have its innocence and its glad obedience.

“And the Lord God called unto Adam and said unto him; Where art thou?” Such was the call of God to Adam, and such is his call to every son of Adam. God is near to every one of us as he was to the first man, and to every one of us has he given his place and work—the sphere wherein each of us is to do, to suffer, and to live. Where are we? And how are we doing our work? Hiding away in shame, skulking off in idleness and disobedience out of God’s view? Or standing in our place striving to render an honest service as in the open presence of the Lord?

In the complicated relations of our modern society, the work of man is greatly multiplied and diversified. In the throng of men, in the competitions of commerce, in the excitements of politics, in the busy whirl of social life, a variety of interests are presented which challenge man's attention, and attract to themselves his passionate regard. Without any extravagance of figure we may liken the world to a garden, still—a garden of various growth, in which man is placed by the all-disposing Providence of God “to dress it and keep it,”—to root out every weed of evil, to watch and foster every flower of goodness, and to prune every tree so that it may bring forth its best fruit. Now, so far as we are concerned, we may make our world a garden fair, or a desert drear—we may make it bloom with beauty, or have it waste like a wilderness. We may do this by the spirit in which we do our work, or fail to do it. All the interests which surround us to challenge our attention and attract our regard, bear to us a certain moral relation ; so that we may still hear the word of God sounding in our ears and saying : this tree shalt thou cherish and carefully tend, but of the fruit of that tree thou mayest not eat at all. The responsibilities and perils of Adam's position are with every one of us. And it becomes us to pause betimes, and consider how we meet them, and to consider, moreover, whether the appearance of the Lord God among us would fill us with shame and dread, or inspire us with lively satisfaction or glad delight.

Some men can do their work in the open day, and

rejoice in the broad and generous sun-light. These are the men of honest, sincere and upright nature, who set themselves to do an honest, sincere and upright work. There are others, again, who do their work in darkness, or by the glimmer of some covert lantern. These are the men of dishonest, base and cunning nature, who set themselves to do a base and dishonest work. With full daylight around them, and the presence of an honest man, such men would be ashamed and scared from their deeds. They would not dare to force a bolt and open a door, or break a safe, or ransack a drawer, for the sake of what money or goods they might find there to steal. With constant daylight and the universal presence of honest men, the burglar's calling would cease. The burglar's calling is a crime against society, and a coarse and palpable form of sin against God. But all sin is of the same nature and essence, though it may not clothe itself in outward and palpable form, but stand as thought only, without revealing itself in word or deed. Whatever stands opposed to divine holiness and rectitude is sin; and God must regard it as such, whether only cherished in the heart, or uttered in words, or acted out in the life. And nothing in the universe is so awful and dreadful as sin—nothing in the universe so much to be detested; inasmuch as it is its nature to array itself against God.

Where are we? and how are we doing the work of life in the department wherein God has placed us? In the spirit of obedience or of disobedience? In the spirit

of loyalty and love toward God, or of rebellion and sin against him? The trees of Eden's garden could not hide Adam from God's view, nor shut him off from the hearing of God's voice. Nor can all the intricate relations of our modern society screen the men of the present day from the same eye and the same voice. The divine eye finds us out, no matter where we are, in public or in private, and in spite of all human devices to evade it. It falls upon us to gladden us or to shame us, to light up our souls with joy, or to darken them with dread, according to the character of the lives which we live.

I have just alluded to the burglar's calling, but this was not because I supposed that any one here would be likely to force a door at midnight and pillage the house. Indeed, if sin always took coarse and palpable forms like this—if it always showed itself as a crime against society, as well as an offence to God, we should be spared a good deal of watching and warning against it. If the police always had jurisdiction of sin, the pulpit might modify its ways of approaching it and dealing with it. Man, however, is not qualified for such extensive jurisdiction over man, and it is not fit that he should have it, beyond the obvious limit required for the protection of life and property. But the spirit which animates the burglar when he prowls about in darkness, animates thousands who never attempt burglary. Darkness is sought and loved because of evil deeds; and concealment is sought and resorted to, through shame and fear. Thoughts are harbored,

feelings cherished, and tortuous courses pursued, where light is shunned and discovery dreaded. Envy and detraction and dishonesty do their work in their own ways, and for their own ends. One is piqued at another's prosperity, and lays hidden plans to check it. One trader passes off his wares to another, concealing some defect in quality or quantity. Many an iniquity is secretly cherished in the soul which would not be openly confessed, though assiduously pushed to results which tend to the detriment and damage of others. How much of the time and thoughts of men—how much of the forces and energies of their nature are spent in this false and disavowed direction, no man can know or pretend to know. But it is all open to the eye of God. There is no turn which worldly cunning takes, no device of plausible hypocrisy in morals or religion, no glossed falsehood in politics, trade, or social intercourse, but stands clearly revealed to that eye supreme. And before that eye all forms of skulking sin are brought to the same level. In them all, there is seen the same disregard of divine law, the same wilfulness and spirit of disobedience, the same shame and dread of detection. Whatever form it may take, it is still Adam in his sin hiding away among the trees of the garden.

Is there not, my friends, a very striking and instructive lesson for us here? Adam's nature is born again into the world with every one of us. I do not say Adam's sin is born with us at our birth, as a current form of theology teaches. No, I hold that Adam's

sin was his own affair, and that our sin is, in like manner, our own affair. I dare not teach a theology which would even seem to soothe the conscience under sin by presenting any view which would diminish the strictness of individual responsibility. I dare not present any view which would encourage any one to believe that the author of our nature was in any sense, or by any implication, the author of our sin. I simply say that Adam's nature was born afresh into the world in every one of us, the same liability to sin, the same tendency to set aside the divine will, through desire to satisfy our own self-will. For herein consists the essence of sin—in this, the arraying of ourselves against God—our self-will against his supreme will. This, whatever form it may take, is the rebellion of the human heart against God, which entails on man shame and fear, disaster and woe unspeakable. While we remember this, we should remember, likewise, that in the complicated relations of our modern society our temptations are multiplied and our evil tendencies accelerated. To the men of our day, the forbidden tree has a thousand branches unseen by the first man, and a thousand tempting forms of fruit unknown to him. Then there are current usages and conventional morals standing thick in the field of life, like so many trees offering us a shelter and hiding-place from the eye of God. Do we break truth, violate justice, set purity at defiance or put love in abeyance?—We quote current usages, and fall back on conventional morals as a justification. Are we not as good as our neigh-

bors, and who art thou—a prophet or a visionary—who would urge any higher way of thought or life? In matters of politics and trade, in the management of general affairs, we work largely through associated action; and under this covert we are often tempted to take shelter from our individual responsibilities. Ah, many a time do men hide away here, far from the open daylight of truth, justice and love—far away from it, because they fear it. And if this light is sent after them into their covert, so that the falsity of their souls is revealed to them, they treat it as an intrusion, and grow impatient and irritated. The demons are evermore impatient and irritated at the radiant and rebuking presence of the Christ. Their cry still is: “What have we to do with thee, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us?”

Adam's nature is born into us all. We have a garden far wider than his garden—a place given us by the good God in the great world of men, wherein we are to do and to suffer, to obey or to disobey, according to the measure of our moral power and spiritual aspiration. We have the varied experience of man for some thousands of years providentially recorded for our help and guidance. We have seen the falling of men through the force of their passions, and their rising again through the mercy of God. The story of Adam himself has been preserved for our instruction. We have seen him in his fall, his shame, his fear, his hiding, his poor exculpation, and his banishment from paradise. We have seen the humiliation, through sin,

of Israel's great and magnanimous king, and his melting penitence when the consciousness of it flashed like a ray of new born light upon his soul. In the case of one of the first and greatest of the apostles, we have seen human nature, in its blindness and weakness, wrapping itself up in the mantle of its own strength and courage, only to be stricken through the heart with piercing anguish by its own revealed cowardice and disloyalty. All this we have seen, and far more too, in Bible history, in other history, and in our common observation, to remind us of the power of sin, and the prevalence of sin, its temptations, and the tendency of human nature to come under its yoke. But, thanks be to God, we have seen, likewise, some of the triumphs of holiness, even when sin tempted strong; and fidelity to heaven, though the powers of earth breathed only threatening and denunciation: We have seen Joseph, and Daniel, and Elijah. Thus it is, that from the varied experience of humanity the examples rise;—some for our warning and some for our encouragement. Above and beyond all others may we see the Lord Jesus—the Son of God and conqueror of sin; foiling the tempter at every turn he takes, whether in desert place, on mountain top, or temple height. The syren voice of evil falls harmless on his ear. Its gilded form has no charm for his eye. Let it rally its forces for the conflict, and ply its strokes in what manner or measure it may, the serene form of the Lord comes forth unhurt and triumphant. He met evil in the strength of God, and hence his conquest of it. He

met it and wrestled with it, in the full consciousness of the Father's presence. By his constant waiting upon God and his unwavering filial obedience, the spirit of God flowed unto him without measure. Filled with the divine fulness, he was strengthened unto victory. Thus fortified he overcame.

And he overcame that we might overcome. Through him that loved us, we may conquer too. His Father is our Father, as he has told us, and his God our God. Our heavenly Father, he assures us, will give the holy spirit to them that ask him. Herein, and in the consciousness of the Father's presence, may we find strength as he found strength—strength even to conquest. And this is the Savior's joy, when he leads his followers to victory through the power of God.

“Adam, where art thou?” said the Lord God. Christian friends, where are we? And how are we doing our work in life? Are we hiding away in shame and fear from the presence of the Lord? Or, living as under God's eye, are we loyally striving to do his will?

SERMON XXI.

VISIBLE CHARACTER, NOT PRIVATE VISION, THE CHRISTIAN MARK.

“I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be.”—2 *Cor.* xii. 6.

THAT we may reach the apostle's meaning here, it is needful to look at what he writes immediately before our text. The favor which certain false teachers had met with in the church at Corinth, had compelled Paul, out of regard for the safety of the believers there, and their right guidance into Gospel truth, to remind them, by direct assertion, of his own superior claim. Such self-assertion was not agreeable to his own feelings, but in so grave a matter as the one before him involved—being nothing less than the issue as between true and false teaching, he would not allow his personal feelings to bar the needful argument. The ingratitude of the Corinthians, and their neglect, had forced him to this course. Yet his was not the self-assertion of vainglory. Quite otherwise, indeed. First and last

he gives God the praise. Personally he is nothing. His claim rests on this: that he is the instrument of God's purpose, willing and glad to surrender himself in every faculty of his nature to divine use. He rejoices not, nor glories, in his strength, but in his infirmities; for it is through his human infirmities that divine grace and power become more clearly manifest. These very weaknesses are turned to highest account, inasmuch as they are made the ground on which the power of Christ may be made to appear.—“When I am weak,” he says, “then am I strong.” This paradox is explicable to those only who can appreciate the deeper religious experiences. God is the primal source of strength. In all the exigencies of life we are strong in proportion to the closeness of our filial trust in him. This was the secret of the Lord Christ's strength. The closeness of his filial trust was complete. And in the measure of the disciple's imitation of the Master, so will the strength divine come. Had Paul sought to glorify himself, apart from God, he would certainly have failed in his mission as an apostle. During his apostleship he was subjected to great trials. He had personal defects which he keenly felt. He was hindered by the opposition of vain and self-asserting men within the churches, and he was harassed by persecution from implacable enemies without. To meet these various trials and embarrassments, he felt he had no strength apart from God. Through this consciousness of personal weakness, he felt the higher strength flow in upon his soul, and so flood his nature that he could

exclaim: "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." (*Phil.* iv. 13.)

The power of Christ's life had fallen effectually upon Paul, and made him a strong and conquering apostle, —overcoming all difficulties in the fulfilment of his mission. He would rather not boast of anything, not deeming it expedient; but since it was forced upon him by the necessities of the case, and in vindication of the truth, he would remind all concerned of what he was, the persecutions he endured, and the responsibilities which rested upon him, and which he gladly accepted and carried, through love of Christ and of them. All this he tersely enumerates in the previous chapter. And then he passes, in the beginning of the present (xii.) chapter, to state facts of another order, in relation to himself. "I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord," he says: "I knew a man in Christ, about fourteen years ago, (whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell; God knoweth,) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body I cannot tell; God knoweth,) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter; of such an one will I glory, yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me." Here we are led to see the special

point to which the apostle refers in his forbearing. As a ground of glorying and of claim to their regard, he might urge the "visions and revelations of the Lord," with which he had been favored, but he forbears;—and this, for a very notable and instructive reason, which we shall presently refer to more at large.

Meantime, we must note the fact of these visions and revelations. They point to intimate and immediate spiritual communications,—openings, so to speak, into the higher sphere of God's thought and presence, so bright and overpowering as to cast into the shade, for the time being, all consciousness connected with the lower sphere of bodily existence. A man in the body or out of the body, he cannot tell. So the apostle speaks of himself. Of such an one in the third heaven of spiritual vision and contemplation, he will glory, but of himself as in the body he will not glory, but in his infirmities. Such is the apostle's meaning here. In the expressions just cited, he speaks in a figure borrowed from Jewish modes of conception. According to the Jewish idea, there were various heavens.—1. The aerial heavens, or region of the atmosphere and clouds: 2. The sidereal heavens, or region of the stars: and 3. heaven proper, or the abode of God and his angels. To be caught up into the third heaven, and hear unspeakable words, is to be brought into the near presence of God, and to be made the subject of spiritual impressions, transcendent and unutterable. Except in the way of figure we cannot localize heaven. The presence of God evermore and

everywhere makes a heaven for the soul who seeks and sees and enjoys it. Said Jesus, speaking in bodily presence on earth: "No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven." Thus did our Lord speak of himself as in heaven, even while he was visibly present in the body upon earth. This shows us that heaven is not to be properly understood as any particular place in the universe, but rather as the state of the soul—a spiritual state, wherein and whereby the divine presence and light is more nearly, and more clearly seen and enjoyed.

Any philosophy, or way of conceiving of things, which throws doubt or denial on the spiritual contact of God with man, is fatal to spiritual life and growth. For such a way of thinking involves a partial dethronement of the universal God. A God partially set aside—thrust out of place and apart from any given domain of being, as an impossibility or improbability, wanes in influence and is likely to fall into neglect. Such a way of thinking accelerates the natural tendency of man in this direction of neglecting and forgetting God. And this is only saying, in another form, that it throws upon his spirit the dark and disastrous shadow of spiritual death. The proper life for us all is only to be found in the living thought of a living God, never far from any of us, but always near, whose offspring we are, and who still stands to us in the close relation of Father and friend and helper. The enthroned perfection of every conceivable excellence, he reigns not

as a distant sovereign, but as a God always near, surrounding us by a thousand influences to win us to a closer recognition of himself, and a more intimate communion with his unbounded love. This planet on which we dwell, with its daily dome of liquid blue expanse, and its nightly sky lit with the clustered stars—with its ever-changing seasons and the varied wealth of goodness which they bring; its institutions of civilization which we possess and enjoy, and all the privileges, social, civil and religious, which these carry and convey to us for our use and benefit;—all these will be regarded by the devout and appreciative spirit as so many tokens of the heavenly Father's care for us, his earthly children. All these will be taken as so many instrumentalities, in and by which he would stir up gratitude and love toward himself in our human hearts. After such manner does God testify concerning himself, his presence and providence in the outward universe and in the events of history. We cannot shut him out from any department of the universe, least of all from that which is most inward to man—I mean man's spiritual being. His presence and influence here have been frequently and signally revealed. Prophetic souls have rejoiced therein, and been strengthened thereby, and their utterances have rung in mortal ears as very strains from heaven, so sweet and tender in love and pity, so clear in calling to rectitude, so strong and awful in warning and rebuke. In and through Christ, he invites the still closer approach of man in filial trust. The gift of Christ

to the world is the Father's assurance to us and to all men, that with him he will freely give us all things needful to the spiritual life. God's love is not partial, nor is his sovereign rule arbitrary, in his dealing with men. His love is universal. His rule is a rule of merciful justice. Never in any age of the world does he shut himself off from contact with his children. He is still within their reach. He invites their approach, and will reveal himself to the sincere and seeking spirit for help and guidance in the spiritual life.

From this assurance springs our hope. Wanting it, I see not that we could have any. Except at our peril, then, we cannot deny the spiritual contact of God with man. The holy spirit is still our helper, enlightening and sanctifying our spirits, and lifting every sincere and seeking soul to the higher heaven of divine vision and devout contemplation. How the spiritual influence comes and goes—the mode of its motion and operation—we cannot well define in words. Like the wind it "bloweth where it listeth," as Jesus said, imparting light to the darkened soul, peace to the troubled, strength to the feeble, and victory to the faithful. From its very nature this doctrine is liable to misapprehension, and opens a way to mistaken claims. It belongs to a region which stretches beyond range of sensible proof. In dealing with claims of this kind, therefore—claims to spiritual enlightenment and influence, it behoves us to consider them cautiously. And even when we feel sure of them, so far as we ourselves are the subjects, it becomes us to be modest in the

assertion thereof. If others assert such claims on their own behalf, we are in nowise bound either to admit them or deny them. No man is authorized to demand from others respect for such claims, except in so far as he can support them by outward and sensible evidence. Of late years, as we all know, the public of America and Europe have had remarkable claims to spiritual illumination presented to them by large classes of persons. All who have given any attention to passing events know how extraordinary the assertions in this respect have been. Other and transmundane spheres have been explored, and reported upon, with as much confidence as we should speak of the visible affairs of daily life. Because I myself cannot make such exploration and offer such report,—this is no sufficient reason for denying the claim of another to this power. But it is sufficient justification for withholding my belief in it, until he can satisfy me with evidence which I can appreciate. In such a case I am willing to remain in suspense; the balance inclining more and more to denial, the longer such evidence delays its appearance. Then, as to the more common claim of spiritual illumination and aid in seeking and finding of truth in matters theological, such aid, so far as I have been the subject of it, may be quite clear to myself. But, in communicating with others, unless I can commend my claim thereto by something beyond my mere assertion, I have no right to expect that it shall be regarded. For, certainly, I could not admit such a claim on the part of another, on the ground of his mere assertion

of it. I must have some evidence which commends itself to my mind. And where such a claim is made on the strength of mere assertion, it shows an ignorance of the first principles both of reason and religion. Such assertion, when made as the ground of glorying or superiority, is the evidence of spiritual vanity and pride, rather than of true and edifying religion.

It becomes us, then, to forbear therefrom—to forbear, as the apostle Paul did. “Visions and revelations from the Lord” we may have—rapt and ecstatic states of mind, which disclose to us the heaven of God’s nearer presence to the soul—sweet and strengthening hours of devout meditation and prayer, when the spirit of man is fortified afresh against the power of evil, and borne heavenward in aspiration; but of these it becomes us not to speak in the way of mere assertion, as ground of boasting or superiority. Nor is it fit that we should give such assertion any respect, when made by others. If my neighbor tells me that he has “experienced religion,” as the technical phrase states it, then, I say, have joy in your inward experience, my friend, but let us see how it affects your actual life in the world. This is the apostolic test—the test to which the great Paul himself, in the height of his spiritual wisdom, submitted. He was favored with “visions and revelations,” which he might have set forth and enlarged upon, as ground of superiority over others, but he forbore—he forbore for this sound and instructive reason, viz: “lest any man should think of

him above that which he saw him to be." "But I forbear," he says, "lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me."

From whatever point we approach the matter, we find that the last test of true religion is to be found in its manifestation in character and life. "By their fruits ye shall know them," said Jesus. This is the Christian mark. All divinely inspired prophets and apostles speak in the same strain. Outward ritualism and inward experiences—each and all are good in their way, and serviceable for their purposes; but without visible results on character, they are ruled out of account as nothing. Circumcision is nothing, uncircumcision is nothing. The keeping of the commandments of God is the chief thing. This is the living law of the living God, which remains in force under every outward ceremonial, throughout every fluctuation of inward experience, and in connection with every dispensation of religion. If the word revealed within, is as the candle of the Lord shining there—which it is—lighting up truth, justice, and love, clearly to our apprehension, it must be borne in mind that such light has not been given for private and selfish use. If this be forgotten, the light within becomes darkness. For such light divine can live and burn only in the open and free air of faithful use, whereby it is made to shine all around as a light to guide others. Such is the nature of the true religion, as manifested in the person and life of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is diffusive, and its spirit is mutually helpful through-

out. The ambition which seeks the regard of others beyond that which its actual merits justify, is the sure token of spiritual poverty and vanity. The humility of genuine faith and love waits in cheerful patience until the fruits of character ripen, and win admiration by their visible worth and excellence. For such faith depends not on human admiration as a stimulus to its working power, but rests in reliance on God ; being quickened by a deeper and more satisfying approval than man's approval.

“ I forbear,” says the great apostle, “ lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be.” And so let every man forbear—forbear from boastful reference to his superior illumination, and cherish that wholesome fear put on record in the text—the fear that he should be judged worthy beyond the measure which his actual life testifies. If his vision be indeed a clear sight into the heavens of truth, justice, and love ; let him put such heavenly vision to instant and constant use, by embodying all these into the form and character of an earthly life. For to this end was such vision given,—that its light should shine by its good works, and God our heavenly Father be glorified in the lives of his faithful children.

SERMON XXII.

MAN'S RELATION TO GOD'S RULE.

“ I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right; and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.”—*Ps. cxix. 75.*

EVERY man's religion takes coloring and character from his conceptions of God. Hence the value and importance of those discussions concerning the divine nature in which we find ourselves sometimes engaged. It is easy to say, “ of what avail is this or that controversy on abstract topics in theology,” and it is easy for the sluggish or superficial mind to acquiesce in their inutility. But when we look more closely to the matter, we can hardly fail to see that the service which the soul is constrained to render to its God, will and must depend on the nature and character of the God whom it is called to serve. History illustrates this, and our daily observation confirms it. Any doctrine which confuses or obscures the personality of God by perplexing definitions, or which presents him to the mind as a being of conflicting attributes or changeful

purposes, weakens trust in him, and throws man back upon himself to drift through life apart from the everlasting anchor. I do not say that we can always read this connection of cause and consequence, as if it were so written on the surface that we had only to see what particular church-creed a man subscribed to, in order to pronounce upon the kind of faith which fills and strengthens his heart. For the truth is, that in creed making, words are commonly used as counters, to which no fixed value is attached, but to which every one may attach his own value, if he will only accept them and save appearances. We can gain nothing by complexity in our ways of believing, but may lose much. Complex creeds, which aim at precision by multiplying definitions, may entertain the intellect by putting it through a process of gymnastics, but they bring no direct satisfaction to the heart. The heart finds rest and strength in the simplicity of its believing. It does not strain after definitions, nor insist on them. It finds its rest in faith. It finds its strength in trust. With it, faith and trust are one—one and the same thing.

When we say that "God is one," and that "God is love," we do but follow holy Scripture in its simplest utterances, which are also its grandest and most pregnant utterances. The simple unity of the one supreme Being whose name is love, whose word is perfect light—the light of holiness, the light of truth, the light of justice; whose ways show love and holiness, truth and righteousness, put to use, that man may see

them and rejoice in them, and prove them in his own experience ; whose rule, again, is a manifestation of wisdom and power ; and whose highest revelation of himself in Christ, was to give fresh emphasis to his character as a Father—the Father of lights without variableness or shadow of turning ;—the simple unity of this one supreme, perfect, paternal God, without variableness or change, ruling the world of men out of the motions of his own infinite wisdom and infinite love, never at conflict with himself or in himself, but ever working harmoniously with the perfect and changeless laws of his own nature :—this is the anchor sure and steadfast, to which the soul of man can cling ; the rock fixed and strong on which the soul of man can rest. Clinging to this anchor the storms of life may blow and the angry waves overwhelm us, but we ride the storm in safety, and rise above the waves. Resting on this rock, the earth may heave around us and the bolts of desolation strike us, but out of the tumult we can cry, “ I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.”

This is the sublimity of religious faith, when it brings the finite and struggling spirit of man to this condition of perfect confidence and rest. It is the high attainment of the true and saintly soul. It spoke through the Hebrew psalmist in our text :—“ I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right.” This is the utterance of a sure faith, a faith which has all the certainty of knowledge. And elsewhere, throughout these grand psalms of the Bible, we meet it oftentimes, as

when he writes : " Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." His felt conviction of the divine presence and the divine love inspired him with courage, and cheered him with light in the darkest day of his earthly experience. It spoke through the Christian apostle, as when he quotes from the Hebrew Scriptures to remind the Hebrew converts of the exhortation which appealed to them as unto children : " My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons." (*Heb.* xii. 5, 7.) Here he affirms that it is through such trying experience that we are brought into closer filial relation with God, as the final rest of the soul.

And this position commends itself at once to the highest and clearest reason, and to the deepest affections of man. It is through faith in the perfect and paternal God that the wearied spirit of man finds rest. Until this faith comes, all is agitation, unrest, vexation. Until this faith comes, man stands in a false relation to all around him. For until this comes, he stands in the strength of a weak and finite nature, struggling with circumstances which no power of his own can ever enable him to overcome. Events come to him in quick succession, elating him and depressing him by turns, making him at once their slave and their sport. Vainly does he put forth his own strength to control them in their final results. The issue which he most dreaded falls ruthlessly upon him, notwith-

standing all his efforts to avert it. His foresight becomes as blindness, his wisdom as folly, his strength as weakness, his activity more disastrous to him than his inactivity. Never, until he comes to feel and confess that the issues are in other hands, and that his part is subordinate, can he find the true satisfaction of his nature. Then, when this comes to pass, when the absolute sovereignty of the perfect God is felt and acknowledged, his relation to the world of things is changed, and he exercises his powers under new conditions. He no longer assumes to be lord paramount of his lot, but finds his highest aspiration satisfied in loyalty of service and willing submission to the one Lord supreme, King of kings and Lord of lords, in whose absolute sovereignty and perfect nature he has an absolute and perfect trust. His best reason is satisfied that since God is an absolutely perfect God, he is to be relied on without halting or faltering on the part of man. His deepest affections are satisfied in the conviction that the perfection of this sovereign God displays a perfect love, and reveals him as a Father most careful and most merciful toward every child of man. His reason satisfied, his affections satisfied, he rests in peace. Whatever may befall him, whatever judgments come or afflictions strike, he knows that they are right, and that in faithfulness they have been sent.

We must not forget that this view of man's relation to God's rule opens a door to human sophistry in the interest of human indolence. For since all is thus

controlled by an absolute sovereign God, who constantly rules out of pure love to his creatures ; and since man, do what he will, can never command final issues, but is bound to submit to any issue that comes, in the conviction that it is the best that could come ; since this is so, then man's part is quiescence. This argument is without force except to those who wish it to have force. If we wish to set up an excuse for our indolence, then it will stand for an excuse. But it is superficial and sophistical, coming from a partial view of the case, and designed to meet a desire, aside from the simple love of truth. Man's part in the universe is never quiescence, when quiescence ministers to his indolence. Man is called to activity in every step and stage of his being. Every endowment of his nature points to a use as its end, to a function to be fulfilled. God has his sphere of rule, which is absolute and universal. Man has his sphere of activity, which is relative and partial. Herein man is bound to put forth his activities, subject always to a higher control, the relative to the absolute, the partial to the universal. Every individual man is an instrument in God's hands, and the use to which the instrument is to be put is indicated by the character of the gifts bestowed on the man, and the sphere of activity in which he is placed. Herein he is called to work and to work diligently, according to his highest light and his purest love. Failing here he fails in duty to God. He is then the "wicked servant," because he is the indolent and negligent servant. Man's highest life

must come from the faithful use of the talents bestowed. Herein and hereby he puts himself in the line of the divine order. Herein and hereby he becomes a co-worker with God, and his march is toward the promised land. His way may lie through the wilderness, where peril and trial abound, but still the unseen God is his guide. The horizon may limit his vision, but faith pierces where sight fails. In faith he works, willing still to accept such results as God may order, bearing in mind that God is greater than he, and greatest of all. It is only when man thus works within his own sphere, and out of his highest light and purest love, that he can safely, and without sin, say that he leaves results to God. God does not rule in his wisdom that man's folly may find rest in idleness.

“ I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right.” This is the utterance of a devout soul, faithful and active within its own sphere. What a contrast in spirit it presents to that of the lives which so many live! How many men and women pass their days in an unconscious protest against the divine providence. With words of formal piety, it may be, on their lips, they give the lie to all such words by the chronic discontent of their lives. Everything to them is a bar, a hindrance, a stone of stumbling, a rock of offence. The persons they meet with in daily intercourse, their position in relation to others, a thousand circumstances in their lot, even to the changing atmosphere from day to day—all act as daily irritants to their nature. Such persons assume their right of eminent domain in the universe,

and that all other people should be trained according to their pattern and have all deference to their wishes, and that clouds and sunshine should appear in the sky in the order most agreeable to them. Nor can cure come to this direful malady of spirit, until the thought of God's sovereign rule becomes a fixed conviction in the soul and a ground principle of life. This kills that selfishness which, by magnifying our individual importance beyond all proper proportions, becomes the prolific root of discontent. The living conviction of God's sovereign rule adjusts us in our rightful place in the universe as part of a great whole, whose highest interests are served by the self-forgetting fidelity of each of its many members. Then comes the joy of content. Then do we regard outward circumstances and events in their proper aspect. The wrong before seen in them is now seen to be not in them, but in ourselves—in the wayward temper in which we before regarded them. When our waywardness is subdued to reverence in presence of the supreme sovereignty; and our selfishness crucified in presence of the sovereign love; then do we rest in calm content on God, honoring his wisdom as greater than ours—making his wisdom our own.

Who can avoid the trial of hard events in experience? None of us. Nor should we desire to avoid them wholly. For they have a high purpose to serve in relation to man. When God strikes the afflictive blow, it is not wilfully, nor willingly, as if he found joy in man's woe, but for an end wise and beneficent—

in harmony with his own character and the high purposes of his government. Disappointments come to man and cherished hopes fade. Loss comes—the loss of health, the loss of property, the loss of friends. Those nearest to us fall before our eyes—husbands, wives, children—and, with tearful eyes, we consign their mortal remains to the dust. What then? Is hope gone—following health or wealth in their flight? Is trust buried in the tomb? No, for we know that God reigneth, always supreme in darkness as in light, in tribulation as in joy. We know that his judgments are right, and that when afflictions come, they come in faithfulness to us. We know that though clouds and darkness are round about him, justice and mercy are the habitations of his throne.

Four weeks ago to-day* I had occasion to refer to the bereavement and sorrow which had come to several households of our worshipping society. Children had recently been called away, leaving parents behind with aching hearts. And since then, several other households of our congregation have been called to suffer in like manner—my own among the number. For the expressions of sympathy tendered through your managing committee, and for the manifold acts of kindness and consideration shown by one and another, and more than I shall now name; let me here express the gratitude of my household. The illness which resulted in the removal of a very dear child from our

* Spoken, Sept. 8, 1867.

earthly sight was a lengthened one, and for many weeks past was felt by her mother and myself to be a hopeless one, so far as recovery was concerned. Under the circumstances, we felt your kindness and appreciated your consideration, not only in what was expressed and done, but also in what was unexpressed and left undone. For we have full confidence in our friends, and knew that any services in their power were at our command. We feel, however, that our trial is no exceptional one, but of a kind which is of daily occurrence. And we accept it, I trust, in full submission to our heavenly Father's will, and in full assurance, too, of his love even when he strikes the afflictive blow. Through this personal experience of bereavement, I shall learn, as experience only can teach, to enter more fully by sympathy into the bereavements and trials of others ; for daily observation shows us that to this lot, in some form, are we all born.

A very noticeable fact in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, is his recognition of the trials of the human lot. One of his earliest utterances was a blessing on the mourners and a promise of comfort. He was himself a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Thus, through personal experience of trial, entering into direct sympathy with humanity in its sorrows. Never is Christ nearer to any of us than when weary and heavy laden with a burden of care or sorrow. His call is, "Come unto me,—come unto me ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The light of the saintly life is seen in

Jesus. And thus he becomes to all who follow him in faith (which is trust), at once a sure guidance and a sure comfort. For he leads us to God, his Father and our Father, and invites us to lay down the burden of our care or woe at the footstool of the throne of Sovereign Love. Viewed in the light which Christ has thrown upon it, religion, or the true service of God, is no longer an abstract or inapprehensible thing, but a most clear and intelligible matter, embodied in the person of the Lord Jesus, radiant in his every look, word, and deed. Thus he becomes to man the highest revelation of the religion which God requires. And when the most trying crisis of his life was upon him—when the cross was in view, and the agony of his soul was at its height ; while he prayed out of his anguish that, if possible, the cup might pass from him ; yet did he, out of his living trust in God, nevertheless say, ‘ Not *my* will, O Father, but *thine* be done.’ This is Christ’s testimony to the great and consolatory truth set forth in our text : that whatever comes to pass in the divine order of events is right ; that even when affliction strikes, the stroke comes in faithfulness to us. For God rules in and over all affairs and events, and his is the rule of infinite wisdom, infinite justice, and infinite love.

SERMON XXIII.

TRIBULATION.

“These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”—*John xvi. 33.*

OUR Lord came to save us, not so much by teaching us how to die, as some would have us believe, as by teaching us how to live. He who lives well can die well. This is the teaching of reason, and of Christianity, which is the perfection of reason. I would say nothing here, however, which would even seem to place limitation on the mercy of God. Nor do I presume to say what he may or may not do at the eleventh hour of any earthly pilgrimage. In the scriptures we are told of one man who was just lifted to the joy of a higher light, and inspired with a heavenly hope in the closing hour of his mortal life. This shows us that such a thing is possible, though the whole tenor of the gospel goes to caution us against a reliance on a late mercy. It offers a present mercy and urges a present

acceptance. And it may be, most likely it was so, that the expiring criminal on the cross beside the Savior, had only had, at that late hour, the first opportunity of hearing his teaching. In such a case, it was the first offer of a present mercy, and it had a present acceptance.

Yes, Christ came to teach us how to live—how to live that we may not know what death is—how to live that the proper purpose of our earthly life may be fulfilled. He came to open up a life without end—an eternal life, carrying in itself a seed of joy which knows no destruction. He showed us God in his holiness and glory, in his justice and mercy; and made known the saving way through which we might become reconciled, and spiritually united to him. He opened heaven to the believing soul, and led it to the blessedness thereof, even while it dwelt in the flesh and on the earth. This was the grand purpose of the Lord's coming—to shed a fresh and divine light upon life, to invest it with a higher meaning than it possessed before, to clothe it with a moral and spiritual significance, before which everything else and less worthy should fade away into nothing.

The life which Jesus magnified was not a life of ease or mere enjoyment, still less was it one of loose and sensual pleasure. This latter, indeed, is a statement which need hardly have been made. A life of loose and sensual pleasure carries its condemnation on its own front. But it is hardly so with a life of ease and enjoyment. This does not appear to carry any such

condemnation along with it. What else should we live for? is the thought which lies in thousands of hearts to-day. What in the world is better than ease? What more worthy than enjoyment? Yes, tens of thousands toil in our day with these thoughts uppermost. They are content to toil in the present that they may enjoy ease in the future, and they have scarcely any loftier conception of life than as a prosperous career. Adversity seems to them the breaking down, or failure of life. Disappointment and trouble appear to their eyes unmitigated calamities.

But Christ taught differently. He saw farther into the moral purpose of life, and knew that an immortal soul was made for something nobler than the mere enjoyment of ease. He scanned the deep places of man's nature, and knew that the higher spiritual birth sprang from the pangs of conflict, and was to exist subject to tribulation and struggle in the world. For he recognised duty. He lived for it himself and called on all his followers to live for it likewise. But the way of duty is rarely the way of ease. The world is not a field of velvet grass shaded and sheltered from the searching storms of circumstance. No, verily. It is a rough and stony highway to the faithful pilgrim, wherein oftimes he has to toil through exposed and solitary passes, searched by the winds and scathed by the tempest. There can be no virtue where there is no struggle, as there can be no victory where there is no foe. Neither man nor thing knoweth its strength until it is tried. Both are destined to grow stronger through

the trial. The muscle of the limb gathers power through the difficulties against which it has to contend. The root of the pine tree becomes all the more firmly fixed, through the pressure of the storm which bears so fiercely against it on the mountain side. A man, as he journeys through life, may seek the covert that he may escape the tempest, and under shelter thereof he may dispose himself to ignoble ease. Such hiding-places, however, are still within the wide-spread realm of God, and are searched through and through by the penetrating power of his retributive laws. For in these coverts of ignoble ease, where so many men skulk away in order to evade the open and trying path of duty, there arises a thick and smothering atmosphere, where all high aspirations of the soul are gradually stifled, and all that is noble in humanity is wilted clean away. Such is the price which they pay for their ease. Such the penalty they have to render for their dull worldly content.

Jesus said to his immediate disciples, that in the world they should have tribulation, but in him they might have peace. The saying is for us, as well as for them. As he spoke to them the affecting words of our text, a heavy blow to their affections and their hopes was just impending. He, the Master, the centre of hope and affection, was about to be taken away. They had joined him, not thinking that such was to be the result. They had joined him, believing that he was the very Messiah which their nation had so long looked for, and by whom that nation was to be led to a new

and more exalted earthly eminence. The heavenly bearing and tenor of his intercourse with them had won their hearts, so that his mere separation from them became the greatest of griefs. That separation, however, was to take place. It was expedient that he should go away. As sheep without a shepherd—scattered, and without outward guide, were they to be left in the world. Persecution awaited them and tribulation. Of worldly ease or outward rest they were to know little or nothing. Through such training were they to be led onward. Through such discipline were they to be led upward. Disappointment and sorrow met them on the very threshold of their way, and through the pressure thereof were they to rise to the life divine.

Mark the meaning of this fine old Bible word “tribulation.” It has been well said that a single word is often a concentrated poem. The one before us is strikingly significant. The simplest of us know that our English tongue is extensively derived from the Latin. Now the Latin term for a threshing instrument is *tribulum*. It was with the *tribulum* that the old Roman husbandman threshed his corn to separate the grain from the husks, and the operation itself, by which the separation was made, was styled *tribulatio*. This was the first meaning of the word, the separation of the wheat from the chaff. But in Christian times it was soon borrowed from the physical sphere, and fitly and figuratively applied in the sphere of morals. Hence our English word tribulation, literally a thrashing or bruising pro-

cess, through which that which is valuable is separated from that which is useless or hurtful. This is the divinely ordained method, through which man is lifted up, and his higher gifts and holier affections brought out and made perfect. Jesus declared that such tribulation, or bruising, should come to his chosen ones, and experience has amply confirmed his declaration ; and confirmed, moreover, the exalted purpose for which it comes. The husks of selfishness and sin are cast away thereby, and the pure grain of love and trust left as food and strength for the soul. An early English poet has written :

“Till from the straw, the flail the corn doth beat,
Until the chaff be purged from the wheat,
Yea, till the mill the grains in pieces tear,
The richness of the flour will scarce appear.
So, till men's persons great afflictions touch,
If worth be found, their worth is not so much,
Because, like wheat in straw, they have not yet
That value which in thrashing they may get.” *

Tribulation, then, means the various afflictions of life through which we are bruised, and our better nature separated from the husks and chaff of sense and worldliness. “We must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God.” (*Acts* xiv. 22.) Such was the teaching of the first apostles. Paul could write to the Corinthians that he was “exceeding joyful in all his tribulations.” (*2 Cor.* vii. 4.) And to the Romans he

* Quoted by Trench in “Study of Words.”

could write, that he gloried in tribulation, knowing that it worked patience, and patience, experience, and experience, hope—a hope which did not make ashamed ; because grounded in the love of God. (*Rom. v. 3-5.*)

“ In the world ye shall have tribulation.” These words, I have said, are for us, as well as for the first disciples of the Lord. Do we seek to evade the discipline, and look upon a life of ease, or a career of unbroken prosperity, as a more excellent way ? If so, I marvel not, for man does not naturally go forward with ready will to meet pain, and taste of the cup of sorrow. But if he is wise he will learn by observation and experience. It has been well said that “ an uninterrupted flow of worldly prosperity, even if amiably enjoyed, and unstained with vice, weakens and dissolves those higher faculties of the soul which converse with things eternal and unseen—makes us too keenly sensitive to the immediate sources of our personal enjoyment and distinction—absorbs the ideal into the actual—and at last, perhaps, from sheer failure of any adequate excitement, lets down the soul into a stagnant depth of weariness and apathy.” * The facts of human life, as commonly observed, amply justify this remark. Amiability and freedom from vice there may be in connection with an unbroken career of ease and prosperity, but connected therewith, also, is generally found weakness and depreciation of character. A man acquiescing in wrong, and accommodating his convictions

* Rev. J. J. Tayler.

to circumstances, merely for the sake of quiet, is one of the saddest spectacles which a clear moral vision can behold. I have already spoken of the penalty that is paid for this kind of ease. Not, however, until the vision is somewhat cleared, can we discern the extent and nature of this penalty. In the sphere of the personal affections, likewise, we may readily become weak, through an enjoyment long unbroken. Where no bereavement or sorrow has come, the soul is prone to wax heedless of the realities which lie beyond this world of time and sense. It is prone to fix on this world as the place of its chief joy.

Man does not naturally welcome tribulation, but experience may teach him that it is the most blessed of visitors. Experience will teach him so, if he bow his soul devoutly when the inevitable guest comes, and strive not passionately against it. None pass through life without some affliction, and all may partake of the blessing which it brings. To the Christian heart sorrow always carries its own compensation. It puts us through a process whereby the permanent is clearly distinguished from the perishable, and forcibly commended to us as an object of abiding reliance. Heavenly realities rise before our view, as the realities of earth are seen to fade away. Manifold are the forms which our human sorrow takes, but every form may become a minister to the same grand purpose of exalting the soul. Yes, manifold, indeed, are the forms of human sorrow; and some of them of a kind which the multitude may not readily understand. Behold a man

toiling alone, or almost alone—with but scanty sympathy—on behalf of some great idea. The vast course of human life rushes on in rude and heedless haste, deifying an outward prosperity, and so thoroughly possessed by the low actual life which they live, that they do not pause to give ear to any nobler ideal. Or, if they do pause, it is to turn away incredulous or scoffing. With the awful realities of actual life present to his eye, and pressing on his soul, and the tones of pure truth and pure justice still sounding in his ears, a sorrow, deep and fixed, springs up within him. It is thus with the great prophets and leaders of our race. We may read in their countenance the deep, sad earnestness of their soul. They are slighted and despised, scoffed and stoned in their day, but the word they utter becomes the seed of a higher life to the generations that follow after. A sorrow like this brings its own compensation in peace of conscience and peace with God. To conscience and to God the soul has been faithful, scorning to acquiesce in prevalent wrong for the sake of personal quiet, or accommodate itself to actual circumstances for the sake of popular favor. The joy of freedom from such moral degradation and spiritual darkness, is felt to be a satisfaction far transcending any that can spring from the companionship, or even the laudation of the thoughtless multitude.

Again ; we see a man checked in the midst of an outwardly prosperous career. His life was flowing as a golden tide, bearing along wealth from every shore. His heart was elate at the prospect, and in the garner

where he stored his riches he went on gradually to fix his life and joy. But the golden tide is stopped in its flow, and in its ebbing it carries all away. His ideas of life and joy are hereby rudely shaken and overthrown; and when the first pressure of adversity and distress subsides, he opens his eyes to see how needful it is to seek some more stable foundations whereon the soul shall rest. Some thought of God, half dormant, or whole dormant, is by degrees awakened; and, when devoutly contemplated, the heavens open, revealing the blessed realities which defy the accidents of time. At such a season, the words of the Savior concerning the treasure on earth and the treasure in heaven, shine with fresh and precious meaning. The radical difference between the two kinds of treasure is seen and felt. The ebbing of the golden tide is used as a power to raise the soul to heaven.

Again; we seen the messenger of death come to the dearest object of human affection, to husband and wife, parent and child, sister, brother, and friend. Hopes more than can be named, and a love deeper than can be uttered, were bound up in that earthly life. But the hopes, so far as they had reference to earth, are scattered to the winds, and vanish. And the love so deep and unuttered, now lives to feed the springs of the heart's flowing grief. But shall it live for this purpose only, now and always? Was the love linked to the outward form which now lies pallid, and ready to mingle with the dust of ground? I answer, No, to both these questions. Love will not always live

to feed grief, for it was not to the outward form that it was chiefly linked. The shock given to our human sensibilities by the visitation of death, moves the veil which separates the present world from the future, and we find that our love was fixed upon the spirit that has departed, not upon the form which is left behind. In our longing gaze after the object of affection, then, we are carried into the world of spirits. And the more faithful we are to our love, the more thoroughly will we realize the existence of that world. Such is the compensation which this sorrow brings. The beloved dead yet speak to us, and their call upon us ever is to "come up higher."

I know that deeper and more poignant griefs than these may enter and lacerate the human soul. I know there are minds that say in all truth and sincerity—it is not the loss of outward fortune, or the departure of earthly life, that we chiefly deplore for ourselves or for others. We grieve first and chiefly for the fall of some soul from its purity and virtue, and for the dark pall of sin which clouded its departure. Here is the mystery which perplexes us, and threatens us with despair. My answer here is, that relief and light must come, not from philosophy, but from religion. Vainly, and to no purpose, do we reason to clear up the mysteries of the universe. Our human reason, noble as the attribute is, is but finite, and its light is limited. Like the lamp which we take in our hand, it illuminates within a given range, but no farther. Regions lie far away beyond this range—

regions which only the grander lights set up by God can illuminate. Troubled and perplexed by the dark questions and apprehensions started by the existence of evil and working of sin, we may find peace in Christ, in the simple *filial trust* which his religion enjoins, and with which it inspires the believing soul.

“These things have I spoken unto you,” said Jesus, “that in me ye might have peace.” There was but little of what we call reasoning in that last discourse of his, but the appeals to their love and trust were abundant. He spake of the Father and the Comforter; of the Father who loved them, and of the Comforter which he should send to minister to their tried and troubled souls. The doctrine of a paternal providence, at once elevating and consoling, had its divinest expression from the lips of Christ. Darkness and difficulty faded away, adversity and sorrow lost their worst sting, as the thought of a loving God rose to mortal eyes, and found a fixed place in human hearts. Through the leading of Jesus we may rest in peace in the very bosom of the Father. God welcomes every mortal child to his immortal rest. In the world we shall have tribulation. We were made for it. The true life is not one of ignoble ease, but of noble conflict. The Christian soul meets evil and wrong, adversity and sorrow, in the strength of a living faith and trust. It is not cast down or dismayed in the strife, but hopeful and of “good cheer.” For it knows that Christ has “overcome the world,” and it knows, too, that in the strength of Christ it shall overcome likewise.

SERMON XXIV.

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF LIFE AND DEATH.

“To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”—*Phil.* i. 21.

IT is the prerogative of Christianity to augment life, and annihilate death. The measure of life varies as its kind varies. The plant has a life of its own, in virtue of which it shoots forth its stem, unfolds its leaf, and opens its flower. We can see the working of this life and watch its wonderful processes, in the grass blade, the rose bush, and the spreading oak. In some it operates more rapidly, in others less so; but in all we observe the manifestation of a vital force which makes the plant or the tree the thing that it is, different this month from what it was last month, different this year from what it was last year. The life of the plant is one kind of life. We have another kind in the animal. The beast and the bird, in their processes of growth and reproduction, exhibit another order of life, which we at once

see to be different from that of the plant, since it is not fixed to one spot of earth, and made to depend on this for nourishment and support of its functions. The life of the animal can change its place, can move from one part to another of the earth's surface, and is gifted with instincts towards self-preservation and self-support. In man we have still another and higher order of life. Superinduced on the animal nature we have the rational, moral, and religious faculties—faculties which mark man as the chief of earthly beings. As the animal has a larger measure of life than the vegetable, so it is very obvious that man has a far larger measure than the mere animal. Through the power of locomotion, and the gift of instinct, the beast and the bird can spread themselves over a wider range of existence and enjoyment than the plant and the tree. But through the faculties, special to humanity, man can extend himself infinitely beyond the animal, and penetrate into regions of thought and sentiment wherein life acquires a significance and value unspeakably more lofty and important.

Thus it is that the measure of life varies, palpably varies, in the different orders of existence. But the variety is not confined to these limits. It varies within the bounds of the different orders, and most of all does it vary in man. Man, from his augmented capacities; man, from his powers of observing and reflecting, of receiving and enjoying,—opens in his nature a wider field for diversity, and hence we find in him more various measures of life. One hour I may be

in contact with a man whose range of apprehension and appreciation spreads but little wider than that of the animal ; the next hour I may meet a man whose vision sweeps the heavens and the earth, scanning the heights of earthly knowledge, and sharing the bliss of heavenly joy. The one man lives for himself and the present time. His immediate desires are his absolute masters, and to be fed and clothed, and enjoy the pleasures of sense, constitute to him the sum total of desirable life. The other man has learned to subordinate the sensual to the spiritual, the temporal to the eternal, and lives with his eye cast higher and farther into the lasting verities and realities of the universe.

Now, Christianity, by the grand revelation which it makes of the purposes of God ; by its gracious unfolding of the divine mystery in regard to man ; by the beaming light which it sheds on human duty and human destiny ; by the new significance which, through all this, it imparts to human life, augments the measure of that life—it enlarges its scope of living, and enhances its capacity for enjoying. It quickens new sentiments in the soul, and opens new regions of being wherein those sentiments may expatiate and fructify. The influx of gospel light into the soul, its glad reception, and faithful appropriation there, has been styled a new birth. And certainly a new birth it is ; an introduction to a higher and wider range of existence, where visions more glorious, and realities more permanent, break grandly into view. Between the sensual or

animal man in whom the gospel has made no proper lodgment, and the spiritual man who has gratefully accepted it, the comparison, so far as regards the measure of life enjoyed, amounts to a contrast. Even the full play of the intellectual faculty in the various departments of human science, although it largely augments the sphere and enhances the enjoyment of the individual life, yet falls far short of the range which is opened to the religious apprehension through the light and leading of the gospel. For there we behold a God perfect in all his attributes, transcending comprehension by reason of the infinitude of his nature, yet commending himself to our love by his gracious condescension to our weakness—a God all powerful, all wise, all good, all loving—whose every perfection is pledged to man for man's deliverance from evil, and redemption to eternal joy, if he will only comply with the terms of the redemption. By the light of the gospel we behold a destiny awaiting man, beside which all considerations bounded by this earthly existence are dwarfed, and through which life is enlarged beyond all visible limits, and sent joyfully stretching away into the illimitable ages of eternity. Caspar Hauser, shut up in his cellar, feeding from the platter handed in by his inhuman guardian, never mingling his voice with his kind, nor beholding the spreading earth, nor the arching sky, lived a life narrowed to the smallest possible limit for humanity. When liberated from his narrow place and brought among his fellow men, amid the open glories of earth and sky,

how great the addition made to the range of his life and enjoyment! But, lacking the gospel, with all of us it would be only the story of Caspar Hauser on another scale. Shut up in earth and sense, or even within the wider limits of human science and common morality, our existence would be only an imperfect and disjointed fragment of life. Through the essential love and power of the gospel, we are lifted out of these limitations, set in heavenly places, and made capable of holding converse with the angel and the archangel.

In thus augmenting the range and capacity of life, Christianity annihilates death. Death to the natural eye is repellent at every turn. It is the termination of life, or, at best, an awful step into a dark, uncertain place. Its accompaniments are all dejecting. The livid form, inanimate, rigid, and cold with a coldness all its own; the darkness of the grave, and the inevitable and loathsome decay which takes place there; the rending apart of so many ties of affection, and the snatching away of so many pillars of earthly hope and promise—these things, as they lie open to the thought, depress the soul. Hence it has come to pass that death is commonly symbolized by a fleshless skull, and separated bones, and by draperies of the darkest black. Men stand horror-stricken at the thought of death. Show them that it is stealing quick marches on them, and that it stands waiting for them to-morrow, or next week, or next year, and they are appalled. To the natural eye, life is identified with the limited life of the body, and when the body falls, life is no more, or, at best, passes into a sphere of uncertainty.

The assurances of Jesus Christ, and the disclosures of his religion, lift the veil from the natural eye, and show that the fall of the fleshly body is but a process of nature, as the fall of the leaf in autumn is—a process, not involving the extinction of being, but only a change;—and a change, moreover, which widens its boundaries and enhances its capacities. These assurances and disclosures invest life with a new meaning—a meaning which does not recognise any termination, still less a termination made dependent on the strength, or weakness, or multiplied exposures of a fleeting form of flesh. “Lord, if thou hadst been here,” said the weeping sister of Lazarus, to the divine Master and Friend who came to that house of mourning, “my brother had not died.” “Thy brother shall rise again,” said the Lord. “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day,” rejoined the sorrowing Martha. Then said Jesus unto her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” Here was the declaration that death was annihilated to the believing soul. Martha expected a resurrection at the last day. But the Lord announced himself all in all—a present resurrection and eternal life to the soul that has accepted him by faith. Through this blessed acceptance by faith, the seed of eternal life becomes a working force in the soul, a power which cleanses and purifies it, which redeems and uplifts it, and fortifies it with a conviction of duration and of durable life and joy, though all fleshly and earthly forms perish, and pass utterly away.

The idea and assurance of uninterrupted and eternal life which Christianity implants in the soul, gathers hope and comfort and joy in view of the fall of the body. For a soul thus fortified, the grave has no special terrors, because it knows the grave can have no power over it. The same gracious and uplifting assurance which takes the sting from death, deprives the grave of victory, and transfers the victory to the believing and faithful disciple. For a soul thus fortified, the separation from friends, which the fall of the body so peremptorily puts in force, has its worst pang removed by the blessed hope of a future re-union, under auspices not clouded by the sorrows and infirmities of earth. Yea, a soul thus fortified by the Christian assurance, while it girds itself faithfully for every present duty, and would hold it treasonable toward God to murmur at its present lot, can see in the fall of the body a liberation from the conditions of the flesh, its wants, its weariness, and its pressing lusts; and an entrance on a higher and less embarrassed sphere of life, a purer and less interrupted domain of joy.

Christ has said, "In my father's house are many mansions." This planet on which our lot is now cast, is but one of these many mansions of the great Father. Far as human eye can reach, and far farther, roll other worlds, like unto our own; and the fairest reason joins with the noblest imagination of man in peopling these or some of them with intelligent beings, bearing like ourselves a godlike origin, and, like ourselves, under the care and rule of the heavenly Father. And

beyond all these, again, and impalpable to sense—out of the reach of all physical observation—lie other spheres, peopled with spiritual hosts serving God under another set of conditions, rejoicing in his love and his law. Throughout all these myriads of spheres, physical and spiritual, God reigns supreme; his law giving unity to all, lifting all and leading all into one direction—towards himself, who is at once the origin and the end of the universe. It is his life which flows through all. His messianic message comes to all, the power whereof is to subdue evil and conquer death in all its forms. Thus it is that, in every department of the universe, God reigns and rules as King and Father, and every loyal and loving soul is, and feels itself to be, his child—is, and feels itself to be, in brotherly relation with every other and all other loyal and loving souls in all spheres.

But while thus enlarging the domain of intelligent existence beyond any limit cognizable by man, the Christian thought of the future and of other spheres imparts to our present lot and opportunity a peculiar sanctity and value. It does not belong to the Christian faith, in any of its aspects, to withdraw man from the present, in order to attach him to the future; nor to make him heedless of this life, in order to impress him with the value of the next. The same Christian view of life, which enlarges its domain in time and space, and beyond time and space, stamps the present moment and the present lot of man with the highest use and meaning. In the divine order of the universe, the life

of the soul is continuous and connected in its passage from sphere to sphere. It is this present moment's fidelity to duty or neglect of it, which prepares the soul for peace and upward progress in time to come, or for unrest and a downward course. As a man sows, so shall he reap. This is the law of divine providence, and it is merciful as it is wise. As we use our spring time, so shall our harvest be. We stand related to others, and to other interests at every turn. Coincident with these relations are our obligations. How are these met and discharged? In a Christ-like spirit, and after a Christ-like manner? If so, then are we following Christ here in the way which will win his welcome hereafter. And his welcome means redemption—eternal rest and joy in God. His welcome means an entrance into the Father's house of many mansions, where the broken ties of earthly bereavement will be made whole, not to be broken again.

It must have been out of the fulness of a Christian assurance which looks steadfastly into the spiritual heavens, that the concise but pregnant assertion of our text was made. "To me to live is Christ," writes the apostle, "and to die is gain." The sentiments of the text and context spring legitimately from the great root of Christian conviction which Paul cherished as the life of his life. He was in bonds at Rome when he wrote this letter to the Philippians. For the sake of the gospel he was a prisoner. He was in the hands of the heathen, and even among his own Christians there were vain, wilful, and quarrelsome persons,

who sought to add affliction to his bonds. But his soul was set to its purpose—consecrated to its one service—let heathen and Christian do as they may. The Master shall be magnified—his claims shall be presented to men, and pressed upon them, to the end that they may be redeemed. No pressure of circumstances should make him halt in courage or feel shame in his work. Let the issue come. He was not to be moved by it. Whatever befel his body, his soul was fortified by its purpose, and Christ would be magnified. “According to my earnest expectation and my hope,” he writes, “that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” Christ was the life of the apostle, and so to him there was no death. The spirit of the Master’s life entered into the life of the disciple ;—to serve the cause of the Master and promote his kingdom of truth and love was the life of the disciple devoted ;—in this way was Christ within him an indwelling light and power, and a hope of glory. His life rose above earthly limitations. That which men called death, and so commonly regarded as a calamity, was to him no loss, but a gain ;—no disastrous or terrible event, but the opening of a higher life, a brighter joy, and a wider experience.

Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. His gospel, with its gracious assurances, was not for one age only, but for all ages. The spirit which shone so conspicuously in his life, and flowed so freely from

it, was not to bless apostles only, such as Paul, but to bless all men. Herein may we have confidence, even the weakest among us. The light and the life of the gospel is freely offered to us, and we may so appropriate it to the soul's use, that death shall be shorn of its terrors, and the measure of life and enjoyment indefinitely heightened and expanded. This light and this life lodged hopefully in the soul, gradually moulds all things to its own purposes. Thought and feeling, word and deed, take Christ-like form. No matter where our lot is cast—no matter what pressure of circumstances surrounds us—we find in it motive and hope. The public man, loaded with immense responsibilities, finds in this, that which lightens his burden. And in the most retired and obscure walk of life, amid its various and trying cares, we may find in this, that which smooths and brightens the way. For, through this, all things earthly acquire a heavenly significance. The earthly life is recognised but as the initial stage of our being, wherein we are called to work in view of a life higher and more glorious. Every duty performed, every throb of love which leaves its trace in our experience, is a stepping-stone to the higher sphere. By these we mount to those loftier regions which God has opened through the gospel.

All this imparts a new and peculiar complexion to human existence, and especially to that event of our existence which we commonly call death. The fall of the body, and the removal of the form from among us, which has been the clothing of the spirit that we loved,

and with which that spirit has all along been so closely associated, must needs stir up sorrow, and plant a pang in the soul. The human affections which God has given us are lacerated by the separation. The departed one has passed away into a sphere where the eye of sense cannot penetrate. If we had no other vision than what the eye of sense affords, we should say that the separation was final and irreparable. And although we possess the added light of the gospel, our human affections are not annihilated thereby. They exist in full activity, and cause sorrow to heave the breast. The separations which death brings are still acutely felt. But the wider vision which the gospel opens, takes the worst sting from the separation; and by the new regions of life which it unfolds, it mingles with the present sorrow a lively hope.

Into these reflections I have been led at this time, by the recent removal from among us of one who shared largely in my Christian esteem and affection.* For her faithful devotion through several years past to the musical services of our congregation, we are all her debtors. Amid the pressure of feeble health, in various trial and sorrow, have I known her, and still have I found her the same—patient, unselfish, thoroughly devout and reliant on God. She was, by nature, a woman of refined and delicate perceptions, and through her child-like and deeply rooted Christian faith, these became sanctified, and quickened into a

* Mrs. F. A. Donoghue.—Died 10th September, 1856.

watchfulness that rarely slept. So far as I knew her, I could not associate any thought of rudeness or meanness—any selfishness of purpose or disrespect of conscience—with her life. Her religious sensibilities were very tender; and while she confessed the surpassing love of the Father, they clustered gratefully and reverently around the person of the well beloved Son. Christ was her Savior, and she was drawn to him by links of gratitude and love, such as drew the Marys of the former time. She was one of those who would have stood by the cross, or watched by the sepulchre.

Since I last addressed you from this place, I saw her, and spoke with her. She had been from home, seeking some relief from change of air and scene. But her return found her farther failed than when she left. And before she had been a week at home she was called away to the higher household of the Father. On yesterday her perishable form of flesh was laid in its hill-side sepulchre, but the imperishable spirit was not laid there. It was elsewhere, and in other company. Life to her was after the pattern of Christ. Death to her was gain.

Christianity augments life, and annihilates death. Yet among Christians how widely does the feeling prevail that death is an event unspeakably disastrous and terrible. To multitudes even in Christian lands it is still the “king of terrors.” Men live all their lifetime in bondage to the dread of it. This is deplorable enough, but not wholly unaccountable. Christian faith is not co-extensive with Christian lands, as a vital

principle. Christianity floats in the Christian consciousness to a large extent as a dead tradition or barren form—a thing to be regarded in its best estate rather as a resort in the pressing emergencies of life, than as a constant and commanding principle of life. Hence the weakness of Christendom, and the cowardice of so many Christians in view of death. By his words and by his works, by his loving life and bleeding death, by the blessed hopes which his resurrection inspires and confirms,—by all these Christ the Master calls on his disciples to show their love for him, and faith in him, by works that have their root therein. Through all the motives and influences of his gospel, he calls on them to make their faith and love the ground principles of the life ; so that all the varied affairs of life, whether connected with the home or with trade, with private or public concerns, shall be inspired and controlled thereby. In a life thus inspired and controlled, the fear of death is cast out. Life becomes a blessed unfolding of capacity, wherein every labor accomplished leaves its trace of present satisfaction—a pledge of the future joy. In a life thus inspired and controlled, the voice from heaven is heard daily, saying : “ Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth : yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.”

SERMON XXV.

ALL SOULS, ONE FAMILY.

November 1st 1868

"The whole family in heaven and earth."—*Eph. iii. 15.*

"all souls are mine"

THE true life of God in the soul widens indefinitely the sphere of its sympathy. Such sympathy indeed, large, generous, illimitable, is one of the marks of the true life. A narrow soul proclaims its limitations constantly. It has its sect or itself, its tribe or its community to love, and within these limits its sympathies are not only bestowed but exhausted. In the earlier stages of human culture, man hardly thought of looking beyond his tribe or his nation with any genuine humane feeling. A geographical mark shut him off from his kind. And this is the tendency of a low and imperfect culture still. We see the selfish nature of man shutting him up in petty limitations to-day, just as clearly as it did thousands of years ago.

In referring to the limitations so commonly placed on

human sympathy, we may as well affirm at the outset that some of them are natural and justifiable ; and capable of being turned to the noblest uses. Of all the hollow boasts which a hollow soul may make, none is more hollow than that which proclaims a love for its kind while its kin is neglected. The domestic circle is special and sacred. God setteth man in families wherein the deepest affections are to be rooted, and blossom, and bring forth fruit. Here we have the type of every larger community—of the tribe and the nation as seen upon the earth, as well as of that larger concourse which the earth itself cannot limit. Here, whatever is best in man must show itself, else the whole character is counterfeit ; all more public goodness is but the varnish of the whited sepulchre. It is not by depreciating the affections and the sacred duties of the household, that we can bring out into full and just proportions the demands of the wider sphere. No : it is rather by magnifying the one that we can properly magnify the other.

For, as I have just said, the household is the type of every larger community to which we are bound by any tie of sympathy. And as the affections are rightly rooted here, and blest with free and generous exercise, so will they be trained and fitted for the work of the wider sphere. It is the primary school, so to speak, wherein our sympathies find their first range, and receive their first lessons. An enlarging experience brings us into contact with a wider world. We go into it as into another school, but not to forget the lessons

which we learned in the first. As we climb the hill of life we see the horizon of duty expand; and still, as we reach to loftier heights, we see our limiting lines receding yet farther and farther. But in order to be faithful throughout the widest circumference, the well balanced soul feels no necessity of being unfaithful in the inner circle which lies immediately around itself. Nay, it carries the ideas and associations which fill and bless that circle—it carries these outward, and applies them universally. It makes them the food of thought and the ground of life throughout the whole. For the good ruler of a nation it knows no higher name than that of the “father of the people.” According to the same thought, a community of nations is styled a “family of nations.” All pure and saintly spirits are named as the “household of God.” God himself is a “Father,” and all intelligent souls in heaven and earth, one “family.”

In setting forth the large sympathies of a large soul, then, we have no intention of pleading against nature. We would not lay sacrilegious hand on a single holy affection, nor seek to steal away a particle of its blessed value. We plead for nature, and for all the rights of the affections. We plead for the tie which binds heart to heart within the domestic sphere; for the tie which binds soul to soul within the same household of faith; for the tie which binds man and man together in fidelity to the country which they call their own. We plead for all these, for we respect their sacredness, and appreciate their value; and it is just because we

have this respect and appreciation, that we would protest against that selfishness which destroys their value, and against that narrowness which stifles unto death the holiness which belongs to them. The man whose love and care for his own family, leads him to overlook the rights and the wants of all other families, shows but a sorry specimen of manhood. He hurts those whom he would blindly serve, far more than he helps them. He hurts them by the example of his own selfish spirit, and by engrafting it on their souls he inflicts a damage which all the wealth and luxury of the nineteenth century would not counterbalance, but only make worse. The man whose sympathies are so thoroughly locked up in his own household of faith, that he feels no sympathy for any other, but stands alienated and apart from all others, by the fact proclaims himself a bigot and not a Christian—a bigot, rendering a narrow worship to a narrow God, which he has projected out of his own narrow soul—not a Christian, living a loving life toward all men, and rendering a loving worship to the God and Father of all. The man whose devotion to his country leads him to disregard the rights and the peace of every nation and people beside, exhibits a patriotism which lacks the only principle by which men or nations can be properly served and elevated ; for it is by righteousness only that a people is exalted and a nation saved. Every artifice of dishonest policy, every act of rapine and violence by which he seeks to aggrandize his own country, hurts it far more than it hurts any other.

Thus do the eternal laws still vindicate themselves against the petty devices of humanity. Man cannot take a short turn on God, nor blot out even a tittle of his law. If man has love in his soul, it is not to be shut up within any given limits—it is to flow outward still, if it would be kept pure, and fresh, and living—it is to flow outward still, through ever enlarging limits. To shut it up within any given circle is to invite stagnation and death. Love, shut out from the large range which is its life, stagnates and dies. Selfishness takes its place and brings forth its own loathsome brood in the soul.

There are signs visible in the present time which ought, I think, to be fairly observed and duly appreciated ; inasmuch as they discover a tendency to enlargement in the domain of human intercourse and sympathy. There are obvious agencies at work in our present civilization which are calculated to remove some of the more prominent barriers which have hitherto held men apart. In the domain of theology, the relative importance of dogma and spirit is beginning to be more generally understood. Highly as men may estimate dogma (and it is proper that they should estimate it highly), they are coming to understand more clearly and confess more readily, that the spirit is of yet more importance. Sectarian walls are always constructed and fortified with dogmas. It is with the bolts and bars of dogma, hard and unyielding, that orthodoxy, so-called, tries to fence itself from all manner of heresy, real or suspected. One style of dogmatic orthodoxy

proclaims itself free from all taint of that which another style of dogmatic orthodoxy declares ought most certainly to be believed. Through the assumption and strife consequent on such sect-building, good men, whose hearts were at one in the spirit of God and Christ, have been kept apart, and made aliens to each other on earth. Against this evil a steady protest, more or less emphatically uttered, has been long going on—a protest which gains an augmented force every year. Dogmas are generally losing their sharpness, and as intelligence spreads among men, it will be more difficult to inspire them with terror, through their lack of acceptance of this or that creed. They will come to see that dogmas are the affair of the intellect, and that uniformity of belief therein is no more to be looked for, than unity of form in the branches of the oak tree or the apple tree. They will come to see that, as the living and fruitful sap finds its way through the crooked and the straight branches alike, and shows itself in blossoms which ripen into fruit, so, amid many varieties of thought and belief, the living and fruitful spirit of religion will find its way and produce its results in the life. In proportion as importance is withdrawn from the dogma, let us hope it will be attached to the spirit. Now, while an exaggerated importance given to dogma separates men, and holds them apart in sectarian alienation, the higher the importance which we can put on the spirit of religion (for the importance of this cannot readily be exaggerated), the more do we contribute toward their fraternal

approach, and toward the realization of that glorious time of promise, when all men shall be one in Christ.

Besides these modifications of theological thought, there is also a modification in the policy which nations adopt toward each other. From the dawn of the present order of civilization two prominent ideas have been at work in it, and quite commonly at work in conflict. These we may call the feudal idea and the commercial idea. The feudal idea was essentially narrow, and limiting in its effect. The commercial idea was expansive. The baronial castle was the central point in feudalism. The owner fortified it, and armed his retainers round about, so that no intruder should transgress the limits of the domain. The warehouse was the central point in the commercial system. The owner opened its doors wide, so that all men might enter and buy. He welcomed all comers to inspect his wares and purchase. He opened up highways on sea and land, so that he might more readily barter his corn for silk, his wine for iron, and the like. The wider the intercourse the larger the trade, so the merchant sought to enlarge the intercourse of man with man. The European nations were organized on a feudal model. The monarch was but a baron of a higher order. The interest of each nation was held to be separate; and immense armies organized and upheld in pay of the crown to protect these separate interests. But the commercial system worked like leaven in the mass, modifying it more or less in every advancing century, until in our time it has almost

wrested England from the control of feudalism. The commercial idea, rather than the feudal idea, now rules the British Islands, and it is gaining in strength and influence every year. The feudal idea would keep a belt of forest between Canada and the United States to prevent intercourse. The commercial idea cuts down the forest and builds railways and telegraphs to facilitate intercourse, and encourage people on either side of the frontier to go and come, and buy and sell, and cultivate friendly and fraternal relations.

The great international exhibitions of produce and manufactures, of mechanical and industrial arts, are prominent tokens of the triumph of the commercial idea in our present civilization. Commerce is a grand pacifier and civilizer. The warehouse is a nobler and more significant structure to-day than the baronial hall. The mission of the merchant is widening into grander proportions every year, and the use of the baron is fast fading away. The exigencies of commerce are stimulating men to achievements, stupendous and marvellous,—urging them even to answer God's challenge to Job of old: "Canst thou send lightnings that they may go, and say unto thee, here we are?" (*Job xxxviii. 35.*) Yes, they urge man to make a path for the lightning not only over the broad land, but under the deep sea, that it may bear his message and serve his purposes. Now, commerce is not a thing of chance growth; and it would be a great degradation to it to affirm that it was merely a happy human contrivance for accumulating wealth. We look blindly

a' history if we do not see the hand of God therein; and in commerce we see one of his agencies for carrying out his high purposes in regard to man. Commerce is a providential mediator between man and man, drawing men out of the limitations of their merely national interests, and blending them together as one family having common interests. The great London Exhibition could not have taken place in the last century. A gathering so universal, for the purpose of generous competition in the arts which go to civilize and elevate our common humanity, could only take place in an age when common interests were recognised, and universal ideas had been scattered far and wide by the messengers and instrumentalities which commerce furnished. God's hand is in the work. The most selfish soul that ever fitted out a ship, or brought or sent a bale of goods across the sea, or took shares in a railroad or telegraph, became the instrument of a higher purpose than he wist. God works his very selfishness into subordination to the divine end of drawing men together, and making them feel that they are one family and have a common interest.

Now all this is Christian, *i. e.*, it is in harmony with one of the leading ideas of the gospel. It is very idle to say that commerce is working in this matter independently of the gospel, for in truth no agent within the limits of Christendom can work in such a matter independently of the gospel. Its spirit enters, and its power operates, even where its name is not acknowledged. The social reformer, impatient

with what he considers the apathy of the Christian church, or disgusted at what he considers its treachery in the cause of humanity, may stand apart from it and affect independence of it ; but the ideas which sustain him have been drawn from the Christian fountain, and no word of his for human freedom and human right can ever transcend the idea of these which Christianity gives. One of the leading purposes of the gospel is to throw down all barriers which separate man from man, and to draw them together as one brotherhood. One of its first utterances, as we find by the sacred records, was against the Abrahamic peculiarity on which the Jewish people had been accustomed to rely with so much pride and gratulation. The name of Abraham was no longer to be regarded as a special mark of superiority by the Jewish nation. Hebrew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, bond and free, were to be made one in Christ. National barriers were to fall before moral forces. God was to be recognised as the Father of all men,—all men were to be linked together as one family.

Christianity justly claims as its own all the agencies by which human intercourse is increased, and human sympathies extended throughout a widened range. Whatever selfishness belongs to them it distinctly repudiates, while it sees in their more generous and enlarged tendencies the working of that divine life which itself imparted so bountifully to the world. It still supplies that life abundantly, and projects it into every earthly channel which is not closed against it by some form of

human selfishness or passion. It throws it into the channels which art, commerce, and literature open, so that as these go forth among men they go charged with Christian influences which they diffuse and propagate. As national, sectarian, and all separating barriers are thus loosened and removed, Christianity sees the results of its own power working through instrumentalities which it had appropriated. It comprehends all such agencies in the sum total of its effective forces, as a part of the whole. Moreover, as it sweeps around all earthly instrumentalities, taking them all in, as a portion of its own working forces, so does its aim transcend all earthly limits. It is not those on earth only that it would bind together as one family. It comprehends those in heaven as well. It establishes an electric chain not merely across physical continents, and beneath deep seas, but throughout the whole spiritual domain of the universe. By this, earth is linked to heaven, and heaven to earth. The boundaries of this planet may not separate soul from soul. These, too, are levelled, and those in heaven and those on earth become one—one in the bonds of a holy brotherhood—one family, whose head is God the Father of all.

Behold, then, the range of our human love and sympathy! Earth and heaven are open to us. There is not a friend whom we have seen and loved on the earth, that may not still be loved, though he be here no longer, but passed into the heavens. There is not a saint or martyr that has won our love by his sanctity or his suffering on the earth, but may still be loved,

though he has passed away from earthly bounds. The deep affections of humanity do not die. They live in heaven as on earth, and still bind together all holy souls in one, whether here or there. "Other sheep I have," said the Lord Christ to the Jews, "which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." Here we find him setting aside the national boundaries which separated one people from another on the earth. "In my Father's house are many mansions," he says again to his disciples: "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, ye may be also." Here we find him comforting his followers with the blessed thought and hope of the family in heaven. His spirit entering the soul, annihilates the limitations of time and space. The Christian heart has a fellowship in every sphere. The early believers, as they attained to the deeper meaning of the gospel, found it so, and rejoiced in the fellowship. Gathered around the table of communion, where they had met in remembrance of their Lord, they did not forget the larger community with which they were united—the larger family of which they were a part. There they sought to remember all, and have communion with all. "In this our communion, we remember"—I quote the words of one of the old Eucharistic liturgies *—"the multitudes of every name who are joined with us in the household of faith—our brethren and sisters in Christ throughout

* The Antiochene *Liturgy* of St. James.

the world. We remember those who have fallen asleep in Christ. We remember the fathers from the beginning of the world ; the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and all who have wrought righteousness, from righteous Abel even to the present day." Thus did they, in their most sacred seasons, seek to realize and keep alive the grand idea of one "family in heaven and earth."

If I have rightly set forth my own train of thought in these remarks, you will have been reminded that, for the godlike soul, the range of its sympathy is illimitable. The love which finds its sphere of activity in the domestic circle must not remain within those limits only. It must pass outward, nor allow even the boundaries of a nation, nor the circumference of the earth, to hem it in. All souls in heaven and earth are one family. There are effective and wide-spread agencies at work in these days, breaking down the barriers which have hitherto kept men apart on the earth. Christianity appropriates these human instrumentalities, and makes them do its divine work. Christianity opens the eye of the spirit to the heavenly sphere, as well as the earthly, and shows us God as the Father, and Christ as the friend and Savior of all souls there and here. Through an inward and heartfelt acceptance of the gospel, we are incorporated into the great spiritual family, and vitally united to God, and to all holy souls, through all time and all spheres. As the early Christian believers, in their commemorative rite, sought to realize this grand idea, so may we. And the

thought is truly a stirring one, and sublime. As we meet, from time to time, around our communion table, we may remember those brethren at Anticch whose words we have cited, and all those whom they remembered. We may feel ourselves one with them in faith, hope, and spirit ;—members of the great body of Christ, perpetuated throughout the ages ;—linked by a living family tie to all holy souls in heaven and earth. Surely this is a thought from which we ought to draw strength and inspiration so to fulfil our part here, and now, that when we are removed hence, we may not find ourselves aliens and strangers, but sanctified to enter, and fitted to enjoy, the eternal home of the blessed.